



Australian Government
Productivity Commission

July 2025

Closing the Gap

Annual Data Compilation Report



The Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission (PC) is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. Its role, expressed most simply, is to help governments make better policies, in the long-term interest of the Australian community.

The PC's independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Its processes and outputs are open to public scrutiny and are driven by concern for the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

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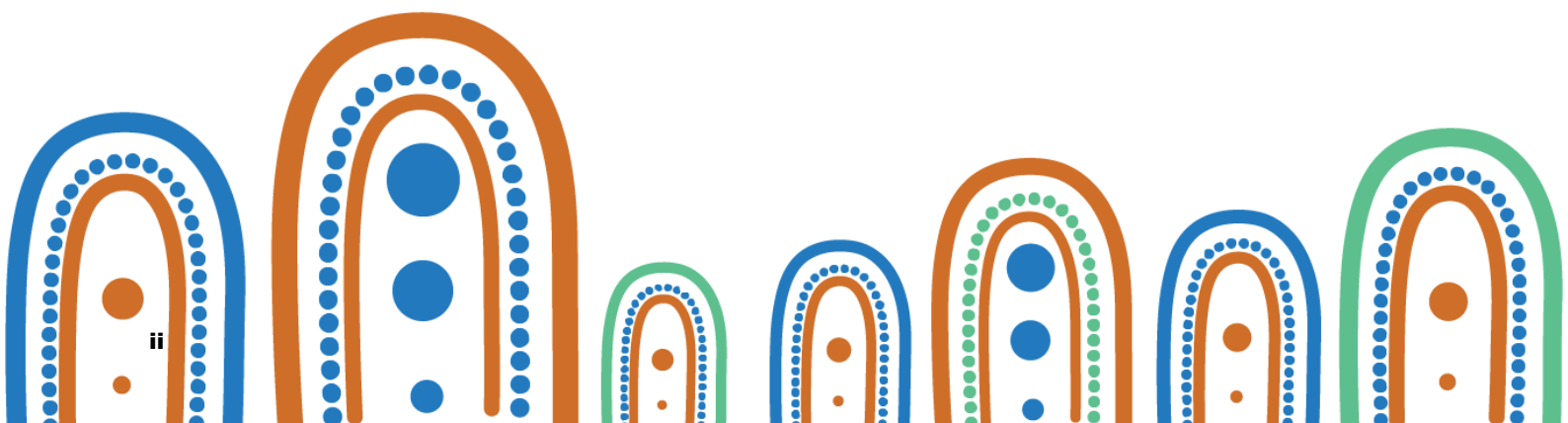
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Acknowledgment of Country

For over 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have sustained thriving, diverse, and interconnected systems of economies made up of systems and knowledge grounded in deep relationships with Country, kin, communities, trade and innovation.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first researchers, innovators and knowledge holders, and honour their expertise and experience, built through an enduring connection to, and custodianship of, Country.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands, sea and waters where we live, work and gather. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present.

Content warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this report may contain the names of people who have since passed away.

This report contains material that can be confronting and disturbing. Sometimes information (words and data) can cause sadness or distress, or traumatic memories for people. For some people, these responses can be overwhelming. Support is available if you need to talk to someone.

The following services are available 24 hours a day:

13YARN: 13 92 76

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

Lifeline: 13 11 14

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About the artwork – ‘Pathways of Progress: A Journey Towards Closing the Gap’

In the timeless expanse of creation, the Productivity Commission embarked on a sacred journey, painting the story of progress across three artworks that echoed with the rhythms of the land and water, resonating with the heartbeat of the people.

Upon the first artwork, hand prints adorned the beginning, symbols of care and connection, intertwined with the essence of Target 1 – Life expectancy. Footprints traced the paths of ancestors, guiding the way forward. Leaves danced in the breeze, whispering tales of ancient ties to country. The boomerang, a symbol of gathering the essence of information.

Throughout the artworks, dots of blue and orange shimmered, reflecting the land and water that sustains us. People symbols strode forward, their presence a testament to collective effort. Each symbol etched with stories of community, bridging the gap between past and present. Within, a sacred ring forms across each artwork, coloured orange and brown, heralding the Annual Data Compilation. Animal tracks of knowledge are placed representing the tracking of information and moving forward, guiding the way. And high above all, unity unfolded.

The top of the artwork portrayed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and government, connecting in partnership, minds united in purpose. As the journey unfolded across the remaining artworks, each milestone is marked with reverence. Through strokes of artistry, the Productivity Commission’s journey becomes a testament to resilience, to unity, to the enduring spirit of the land and its people. And in the end, it is not just a report, but a legacy – a testament to the power of collaboration, of understanding, and of hope. The colours used throughout the artwork were chosen to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



2024



2025



2026



About the artist

Lani Balzan is an Aboriginal artist and graphic designer specialising in designing Indigenous canvas art, graphic design, logo design, Reconciliation Action Plan design and document design.

Lani is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri people of the three-river tribe. Her family originates from Mudgee but she grew up all over Australia and lived in many different towns, starting her business in the Illawarra NSW and recently relocating to Mid-North Queensland.

In 2016 Lani was announced as the 2016 NAIDOC Poster Competition winner with her artwork 'Songlines'. This poster was used as the 2016 NAIDOC theme across the country. Lani has been creating Aboriginal art since 2013 and has had continued success across the country.

One of her biggest goals and inspirations with creating Aboriginal art is to develop a better connection to her culture and to continue to work towards reconciliation; bringing people and communities together to learn about the amazing culture we have here in Australia.



Foreword

The 2025 Annual Data Compilation Report (ADCR) represents the fifth report by the Productivity Commission (PC) since the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the Agreement) began. The intent of our reports is to provide factual insights into progress against the national targets within the Agreement, while highlighting important areas for further development, across the 19 socio-economic targets aimed at reducing disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This report builds on our learning from previous years, as the PC grows our internal expertise in providing robust advice to governments on programs and initiatives that improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, while also providing additional information about each target to build public understanding of their impact for communities.

In 2025, we have assessed 15 of 19 socio-economic targets. Unfortunately, four targets are continuing to worsen, including incarceration rates for adults; children assessed as developmentally on track; children in out-of-home care; and, alarmingly, suicide rates. We have seen improvements in pre-school enrolment rates; economic participation; and land and water rights for traditional owners. Other outcome areas are showing improvements, although not at a sufficient rate to meet the relevant target by 2031, include life expectancy rates, healthy birthweights; school completion rates; post school education, youth engagement; and overcrowded housing. We are still unable to assess progress against access to essential services; family violence; languages being spoken; and internet access at home.

We still do not have any way of measuring the implementation of the Priority Reforms for all government parties to the Agreement, although we are aware some agencies are starting to implement Priority Reform three strategies. Additionally, further data development work is underway through the recently formalised Data Policy Partnership, being led by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to identify and determine relevant data sources for those not currently being measured regularly.

Establishing the full data picture takes time, and we acknowledge the efforts of parties to continue working towards developing a clear data picture. Not having the full picture in place to demonstrate progress will continue to hamper the efforts of all parties to improve outcomes. This is even more evident when parties are coming together to develop strategies at a local and regional level, as there is growing demand for disaggregated data to inform more localised strategies and planning to improve outcomes. This can only come to fruition when parties agree on the right measures to monitor at a national level to inform the disaggregation at a state and territory, regional and local level.

As we prepare to commence our next three-yearly review of progress against the Agreement in 2026, access to relevant information to inform local planning and initiatives is essential. Particularly in areas of greater demand where current performance against targets is regressing. These areas require urgent attention, and we hope this report provides factual information to support the focussed effort required to improve outcomes. Power sharing, investing in community led solutions and sharing data are essential ingredients to achieve this success, and we look forward to hearing more about local solutions for improving outcomes in our ongoing monitoring of the Agreement's performance.

Selwyn Button, Commissioner

Danielle Wood, Chair

July 2025



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Acknowledgements

The PC thanks the Partnership Working Group along with members of the community, organisations and government agencies who have provided data and other information for use in this report.



1. Overview



1.1 About this report

This is the fifth Annual Data Compilation Report (ADCR) released by the Productivity Commission (PC), which reports progress under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the Agreement). The Agreement's objective is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians. Due to the broad and complex nature of this objective, the parties to the Agreement (all Australian governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations) established targets to measure progress against (Joint Council 2020, clause 17). They consist of:

Priority Reforms	Socio-economic outcomes
Four outcomes focusing on changing how governments work to 'accelerate improvements in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' (Joint Council 2020, clause 25).	17 outcomes focusing on the rights, wellbeing and quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Implementing the four Priority Reforms is key to improving socio-economic outcomes. The logic of the framework for measuring progress of these 21 outcomes can be found in attachment 1.

There are 23 targets and 164 indicators across the Priority Reforms and socio-economic outcomes. The targets are specific and measurable goals, while the supporting indicators provide context and information on the drivers of the outcomes. Attachment 2 provides a detailed summary of data collection for the socio-economic targets and supporting indicators.

The PC plays an accountability role under the Agreement by tracking outcomes. It publishes this ADCR, along with a Closing the Gap dashboard (the PC CtG dashboard), with the latest information on targets, including disaggregations such as by age or remoteness, plus supporting indicators from the Agreement. In addition, the PC has a role in comprehensively reviewing progress against the commitments in the Agreement every three years. Further details on the Agreement's governance framework can be found in attachment 3.

The ADCR is published annually and provides a snapshot of dashboard material published on the PC's Closing the Gap dashboard in the last year. Further details on the information presented in the ADCR are found on the information repository. This year's report is focused on presenting new data and has three parts. The three parts are:

- an overview presenting a high-level assessment of progress for the outcomes, information on the data landscape and a closer look at the diverse experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- comprehensive analysis of progress for all socio-economic outcomes plus contextual information that is grouped under nine themes
- an appendix containing relevant background information including implementation and accountability frameworks for Closing the Gap, a data collection summary table and glossary.



1.2 Progress towards Closing the Gap

This report presents the latest assessment of progress for each target. The socio-economic outcomes are reported thematically rather than in numerical order to provide a more comprehensive picture of progress and to illustrate how interconnected the outcome areas are.

Within the Agreement, all Australian governments refers to the Australian Government, and governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory, and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The Australian Government, states and territories share accountability for the implementation of the Agreement and are jointly accountable for the outcomes and targets.

This report focuses on national outcomes and progress towards the nineteen targets at a national level. While no formal targets have been agreed for each state and territory, section two of this report does include state and territory progress. A summary table outlining the assessment of progress for states and territories is also presented in the appendix – attachment 4. For the first time in Australia, a local council and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations have signed a formal agreement to work together on Closing the Gap, with the Tamworth Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (TACCO) and Tamworth Regional Council coming together to formalise a Mara Ngali Partnership Agreement on 9 May 2025. Attachment 5 for more detail about this significant milestone.

The data used to report socio-economic outcomes is fundamental to understanding progress in Closing the Gap. However, data alone is insufficient to understand the diverse experiences and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. Data, especially at macro-levels, can reinforce deficit narratives and binary comparison and fails to recognise the contributions and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Prehn 2024). This report considers the historical and ongoing context for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the socio-economic outcomes within the Agreement. It acknowledges the impacts of colonisation, government policies and legislation as well as the ongoing strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in sustaining the world's oldest living cultures. Given the historical and ongoing context, data collected by governments often does not reflect the priorities and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who have often been excluded from the data governance process. As a result, in the context of Closing the Gap, the ADCR is a reminder that the data collected and reported is a symptom of a broader system.

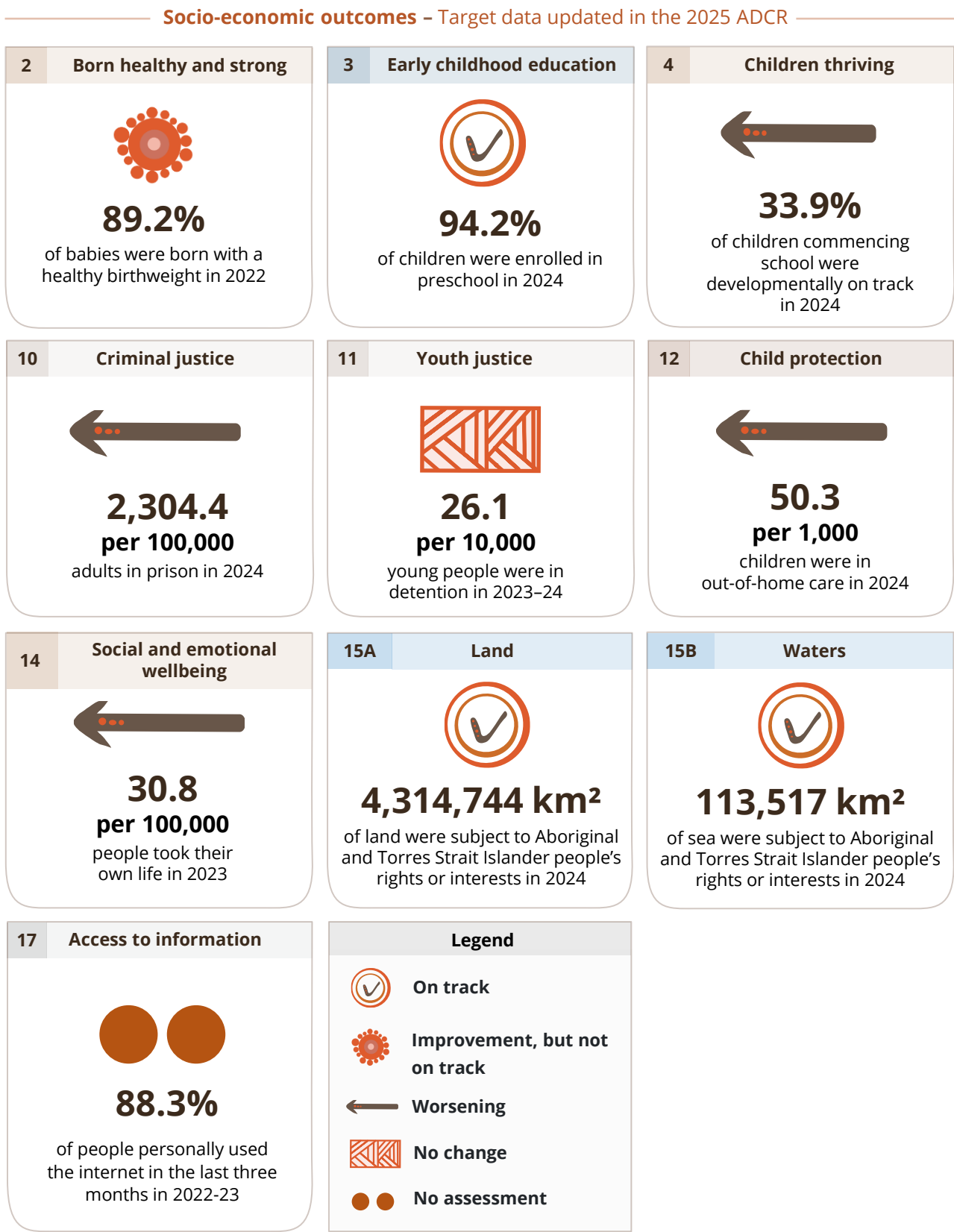
Mixed progress in the socio-economic outcomes

Overall, data is available to report progress on 15 out of the 19 socio-economic targets. Of the 15 socio-economic targets with data available to report progress, four targets are on track, six targets show improvement but are not on track, progress for four targets is worsening and one has shown no change from the baseline (table 1.1).

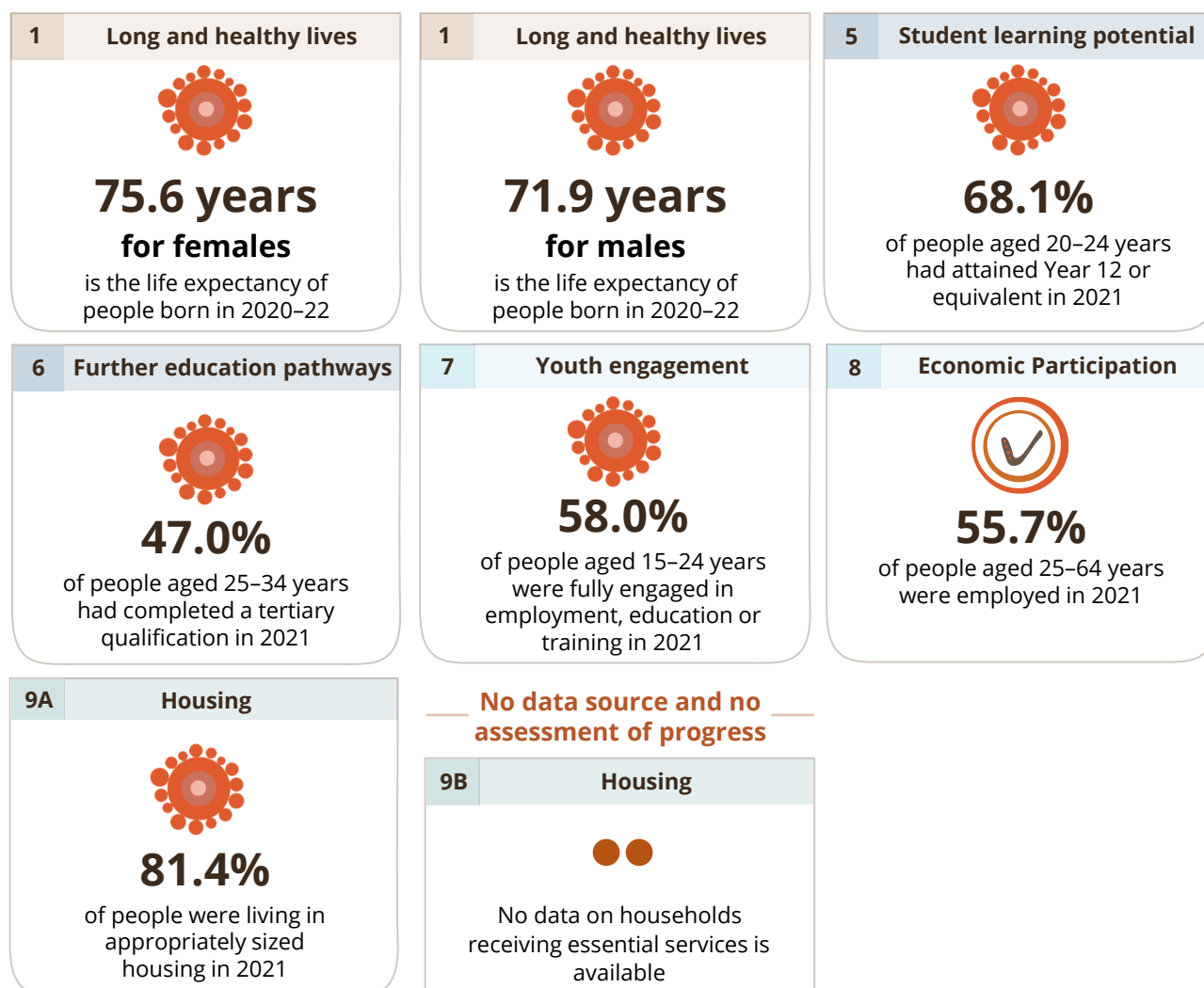
Of the 15 targets, there was new data to assess progress for ten targets (2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15A, 15B and 17) since the 2024 ADCR. Of those ten targets, only one target (Target 2) had a change in the assessment of progress. Figure 1.1 presents a progress of assessment summary for the socio-economic targets.



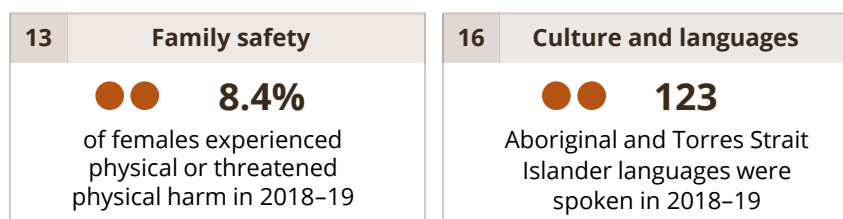
Figure 1.1 – Priority Reforms and socio-economic outcomes – progress assessment



Socio-economic outcomes – Target data from a previous ADCR



No recent assessment of progress



Priority reforms – No measurement to assess progress



Table 1.1 – Summary of progress grouped by themes

Health, wellbeing and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people is improving but the target of a life expectancy gap of zero is not on track to be met by 2031 (Target 1). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies are being born at a healthy birthweight but the target of 91% is not on track to be met by 2031 (Target 2).* The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track has declined and the target is currently not on track to be met by 2031 (Target 4).* For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the rate of deaths by suicide is increasing and the target of a significant and sustained reduction is not on track to be met (Target 14).*#^
Families and kin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care has increased since the baseline and the target is not on track to be met by 2031 (Target 12).*#^ There is still no data available to track the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and children who have experienced family violence (Target 13).
Culture and language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is still no new data available to report on the progress towards a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages since the baseline was established (Target 16).
Education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education is 94.2% and the target of 95% is on track to be met by the end of 2025 (Target 3).*# The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attaining Year 12 or equivalent is increasing, but the target is not on track to be met by 2031 (Target 5). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification is increasing, but the target is not on track to be met by 2031 (Target 6). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people fully engaged in employment, education or training has increased but the target of 67% is not on track to be met by 2031 (Target 7).
Economic participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been an improvement in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed and the target is on track to be met by 2031 (Target 8).
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing, but this target is not on track to be met by 2031 (Target 9A). The required data is not available to report progress on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household access to essential services (Target 9B).
Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of land mass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests is increasing and on track to be met by 2030 (Target 15A).* The proportion of sea area covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights or interests is also increasing and is on track to be met by 2030 (Target 15B).*
Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults continue to be incarcerated at increasing rates and the target of a 15% reduction by 2031 is not on track to be met (Target 10).*#^ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system and no progress has been made (Target 11).*#^
Digital Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data is not available to assess progress towards increased access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Target 17).

Note: Targets with this symbol * have new data to assess progress since the 2024 ADCR. Targets with this symbol # have revised historical data due to updates in population estimates and projections. Targets with this symbol ^ have been revised due to updates in population estimates and projections.



1.3 A closer look at diverse experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing can encompass the cultural, mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions of individuals and community (Dudgeon et al. 2014). Applying this perspective to the Agreement means that the socio-economic outcomes, including their targets and disaggregations, could be viewed as mutually reinforcing. For instance, access to culturally responsive education not only enhances educational attainment but also improves employment opportunities. This interconnection across all outcomes means progress should not be viewed in isolation.

Progress toward the targets under the Agreement is reported at a national level, which means the data may not reflect the different experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Breaking down the data – or disaggregating it – can provide more insights into the outcomes and experiences in different regions and population groups, highlighting areas of progress and where greater effort is needed (Joint Council 2020, clause 82). For example, living with disability or living in a remote area can present unique challenges that can affect outcomes significantly. Understanding the experiences of different population groups can help to tailor policies and programs and enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to make more informed decisions about their lives.

Disaggregated data is available for most outcomes, including by age, sex, disability status, remoteness area and socio-economic status of the locality. However, data by gender and for key priority groups such as the Stolen Generations and LGBTQIA+ individuals is not currently available (box 1.1).

The intersection of location and demographic factors may create additional advantages or barriers. For example, a young Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person with disability living in a very remote area may face greater challenges compared to others. Individuals with multiple intersecting attributes often experience more complex and compounding disadvantages across socio-economic outcome areas. While some disaggregated data is available, reporting on outcomes by intersecting factors is limited.

Box 1.1 – Recognising diverse experiences and the limits of available data

The Agreement emphasises the importance of reflecting the diverse and intersecting experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including by age, gender, remoteness and the socioeconomic characteristics of the communities where people live (clause 82). It also highlights the importance of ensuring that reporting reflects the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, LGBTQIA+ people and people that were forcibly removed from their families and communities (the Stolen Generations) (clause 93).

Most socio-economic outcomes in this report include data by sex, age group, remoteness area, the level of socioeconomic disadvantage and disability status. However, there are some important gaps in the data.



Box 1.1 – Recognising diverse experiences and the limits of available data

Data records sex but not gender

The PC CtG dashboard and ADCR report data disaggregated by sex, categorised as female and male, rather than gender, reflecting broader limitations in national collections. Gender and sex are not interchangeable – they refer to two distinct parts of a person’s identity and experience.

Because the data is disaggregated by sex, this report refers to females and males rather than women and men. This choice intends to ensure the accuracy of reporting while also acknowledging that the available data cannot account for the diverse lived experiences of people who are transgender, non-binary and gender diverse.

In 2026, the ABS’ Census of Population and Housing will include a gender question, which will provide a Census population count based on gender. Where jurisdictional and administrative data collection systems evolve to confirm a person’s gender using the same levels of identification as the Census, we will be able to report target and indicator data for based on gender.

Missing and limited data for some populations

Beyond gender identity, some people’s experiences are not captured in the available data. This includes LGBTQIA+ people, including sistergirls and brotherboys, whose experiences reflect significant and intersecting points of discrimination and marginalisation. Current available data also does not include people from the Stolen Generations.

Data on disability is defined differently across outcomes. It is often based on the view that a person is born with, or acquires, an impairment that limits everyday activities or participation. This may not align with how disability is understood in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where disability is seen not as a limitation, but as a result of the barriers to equal participation in the social and physical environment. Efforts are underway to close this gap, including Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–2031, which aims to improve access to data that reflects the priorities, needs and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

Source: ABS (2025b); APSC (2024); DSS (2024); FPDN (2024) and Joint Council (2020).

People living in more remote areas typically experience poorer outcomes

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in urban and regional areas than remote areas, but they make up a higher proportion of the total population living in remote areas (AIHW 2025a). This report shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in more remote areas typically experience poorer outcomes across many dimensions of wellbeing than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in cities and regional communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote areas may face barriers to better outcomes, such as access to and availability of culturally responsive government services and infrastructure (AIHW 2025a).

Comparing progress towards targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote and very remote areas with those living in regional areas and major cities paints a mixed picture. People in remote and very remote areas have seen smaller improvements or very modest changes in



preschool enrolments (Target 3), Year 12 attainment (Target 5) and tertiary education (Target 6) compared to their less remote counterparts. Additionally, outcomes in healthy birthweights (Target 2), youth engagement in employment, education or training (Target 7) and economic participation (Target 8) have worsened for people living in remote and/or very remote areas while improving for people in other areas.

A number of targets are improving at the national level, but where this progress is happening varies across targets. For targets in education and economic participation (Targets 5, 7 and 8), much of the progress has been driven by gains in regional areas. For other outcomes, including life expectancy for females (Target 1), social housing (Indicator 9g) and community broadcast licenses (Indicator 17g), the largest improvements have occurred in remote and very remote areas, suggesting that access to some important community facilities is improving in these regions.

For targets that are worsening, the lack of progress also varies across remoteness level. Progress towards a sustained reduction in suicide rates (Target 14) is worsening across all areas of remoteness and outcomes are poorest for people in remote and very remote areas. For childhood development (Target 4), the other target with worsening national outcomes and available remoteness data, very remote areas are the only region with positive progress.

People living in the most disadvantaged areas are seeing improvements across many outcomes

In 2021, around 45% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived in communities considered among the 20% most disadvantaged communities nationally, based on factors such as income, education and employment (AIHW 2024). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the most disadvantaged areas experience poorer outcomes than people living in the most advantaged areas. This is seen across the 10 targets where data is available based on the level of disadvantage in the communities where people live, including in health, education, housing and internet access.

Over time, outcomes are improving across many targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the most disadvantaged communities. Improvements have been greater for people in the most disadvantaged areas than for those in the least disadvantaged areas in Year 12 attainment (Target 5), tertiary qualifications (Target 6), higher education offers (Indicator 6b), employment (Target 8) and appropriately sized housing (Target 9A). In contrast, progress has been slower for people in the most disadvantaged areas for healthy birthweights (Target 2) and preschool enrolments (Target 3). In another two, childhood development (Target 4) and youth engagement in employment, education or training (Target 7), outcomes have worsened in the most disadvantaged communities while improving in more advantaged ones.

Outcomes for young people are mixed

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a younger age profile than the non-Indigenous population (AIHW 2024e). Progress across the eight socioeconomic targets that relate specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (aged under 25 years) is mixed. Only preschool enrolment (Target 3) is on track to be met, while four other outcomes have improved but are not on track to reach the target – life expectancy at birth (Target 1), healthy birthweights (Target 2), school attainment (Target 5) and youth engagement in employment, education or training (Target 7). Youth detention rates (Target 11) have shown no change from the baseline and both the proportion of



children developmentally on track (Target 4) and the over-representation of children in out-of-home care (Target 12) have worsened.

Comparing the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (aged under 25 years) to those of young and middle-aged adults (aged 25–49 years) shows some positive outcomes, with young people having lower rates of adult incarceration (Target 10) and mortality (Indicator 1b). However, poorer outcomes in other areas reveal the persistent challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Relative to their older counterparts, young people were less likely to live in appropriately sized housing (Target 9A) and young females had higher rates of deaths by suicide (Target 14).

Some outcomes highlight the vulnerability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young teenagers. Just over one third of young people in youth detention in 2023–24 were aged 10–13 years at the time of their first detention (Indicator 11h), and children aged 10–14 years had the highest rates of placement in out-of-home care in 2024 (Target 12).

Males and females experience differences in socio-economic outcomes

Although female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people tend to fare better than males across a range of social and health outcomes, there are some areas where males have more favourable outcomes.¹ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females have higher life expectancy (Target 1) and are more likely than males to be assessed as developmentally on track when commencing school (Target 4), to attain a year 12 or equivalent qualification (Target 5) and to complete tertiary education (Target 6). Female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also have lower rates of youth detention (Target 11), adult incarceration (Target 10) and death by suicide (Target 14). In contrast, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males are more likely than females to be employed (Target 8), to be fully engaged in employment, education or training (Target 7) and to live in appropriately sized housing (Target 9).

Over time, outcomes for females have generally improved at a similar or faster pace than for males. Of the 13 targets with data for males and females, females saw greater improvements in five areas, including employment (Target 8) and engagement in employment, education or training (Target 7) and a more modest deterioration of suicide rates (Target 14). Males saw greater gains or smaller declines in four outcomes. The remaining three outcomes showed similar trends for both males and females, whether improving or worsening.

The lives of people with disability are seeing some improvement

Around one in four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were living with disability in 2022 (ABS 2025a). Since 2015, there has been an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged under 35 years with disability (ABS 2025a). This trend is reflected in the increasing proportion of children with disability or special needs in the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) (Target 4), out-of-home care (Target 12) and state and territory government-funded preschool programs across most jurisdictions (Target 3).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who needed assistance with core activities have experienced improvements in tertiary education (Target 6), economic participation (Target 8) and appropriately sized housing (Target 9A). However, progress in these areas has been less pronounced than for Aboriginal and

¹ The data records sex but not gender. For accuracy, this report refers to sex when referring to data. For more information on box, refer to box 1.1.



Torres Strait Islander people who did not need assistance. Two notable exceptions to this trend stand out. Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needing assistance saw greater progress in Year 12 attainment than those not needing assistance (Target 5). In contrast, the proportion of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who needed assistance with core activities and were fully engaged in employment, education or training declined, but the proportion of people not needing assistance who were fully engaged in these activities increased (Target 7).

Disability can also impact the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who provide care to someone with disability. There has been some improvements in education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers. A smaller proportion of young people not fully engaged in employment, education or training were providing unpaid care and assistance to a child and/or a person with disability (Indicator 7a) and employment rates increased slightly more for adults who provided unpaid assistance to a person with disability, a health condition or old age compared to those who did not (Indicator 8c).

1.4 Understanding the data landscape

Progress assessments, along with other Closing the Gap data, should be considered in the context of the data landscape, including how frequently data is reported, the quality of the data and where there are data gaps.

It is not currently possible to assess progress for every target and some targets cannot be assessed every year due to the frequency of data collection and reporting. Despite these data limitations, this year's report contains substantial updates, including progress for ten socio-economic targets, a new year of data for 26 supporting indicators, 16 supporting indicators reported for the first time and two new measures for an existing supporting indicator (table 1.2).²

Table 1.2 – What new data is in this report?

Updated targets	Supporting indicators with a new year of data	New supporting indicators
10 targets: 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15A, 15B and 17	26 supporting indicators across outcome areas: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17	16 new supporting indicators across outcome areas 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17

Note: Target 17 has been updated but estimating a trajectory to achieve parity is not currently possible.

Since the ADCR was first published, progress has not been assessed for four socio-economic targets and updates to progress for seven targets have occurred only once. Six targets can only be updated every five years. Most data used to assess progress against the targets is drawn from government agencies, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). This report (and the PC CtG dashboard) does draw on some community-sourced data,

² Targets for socio-economic outcome areas are numbered (1–17), and where socio-economic outcome areas have two targets they are represented by capital letters (for example 15B). All socio-economic outcome area supporting indicators are referred to using lowercase letters (for example 6a).

In this report, references for target or indicator data tables are titled CtG or SE, respectively, followed by the corresponding letter and then a period and a number. For example, CtG15B.1 refers to the first data table of the second target in outcome area 15, and SE6a.3 refers to the third table of the first indicator in outcome area 6.



such as the count of early years services (Indicator 3b).³ Table 1.3 provides some information on the frequency of the data for assessing progress of socio-economic targets. Attachment 2 provides a detailed summary of data used for reporting on targets and supporting indicators.

Table 1.3 – Data collection frequency for socio-economic outcome targets as at 30 July 2025^a

Target number	Last data reported on dashboard	Frequency
Targets 3, 10, 12, 15A, 15B	2024	Annually
Target 11	2023-24	Annually
Target 14	2023	Annually
Target 2	2022	Annually
Target 4	2024	Every three years
Targets 5, 6, 7, 8, 9A	2021	Every five years
Target 1	2020–2022	Every five years
Target 16	2018-19	Periodic
Target 13	2018-19	To be confirmed
Targets 17	2014-15	To be confirmed
Target 9B	Not applicable	Not applicable

a. A detailed summary of Closing the Gap data collection can be found in attachment 2. If no new data is available for a target, readers are referred to the source of the most recent data, such as the 2022, 2023 or 2024 ADCR publications or the PC CtG dashboard.

Target 3 has a target year of 2025 and has been measured annually since it was established in 2020. Target 17 was established in 2021 and has a target year of 2026 that has not yet been assessed due to insufficient data. Most of the 19 socio-economic targets (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9A, 9B, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 16) have a target year of 2031. By 2031, six of these targets will have had their assessment of progress updated twice, one target will have had assessment of progress updated three times and seven targets will have updated progress annually. Four targets have no confirmed or applicable data available to report progress.

The data outlined in this report and on the PC CtG dashboard is a portion of the indicators outlined in the Agreement. The PC works with the parties to the Agreement to specify and develop the supporting indicators named in the Agreement, expanding the range of indicators reported each year. The Agreement outlines 23 targets and 164 supporting indicators across the Priority Reforms and socio-economic outcomes. The scope of outstanding material to be reported remains extensive. There

³ According to the Closing the Gap Data Development Plan (2022–2032), community-sourced data is driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and priorities, supports self-determination for place-based decision-making and ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are data custodians, controlling the narrative and access to data.



is also additional work underway within governments and the community to progress the Agreement's approximately 150 data development items outlined in the Closing the Gap Data Development Plan.⁴

No data to assess progress on the Priority Reforms

Priority Reform 1: Formal partnerships and shared decision-making	Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector	Priority Reform 3: Transforming government organisations	Priority Reform 4: Shared access to data and information at a regional level
Partnership arrangements in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments enshrining joint decision-making	Increase the amount of government funding going to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations	Decrease the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experiences of racism	Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions

The PC does not currently report on progress towards achieving Priority Reforms. The PC understands that a measurement framework and recommended indicators have been under development and that a final report has been submitted to the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). The parties to the Agreement have not yet settled on how progress should be measured or the data that should be drawn upon. Attachment 6 outlines the process for the development of reporting on the Priority Reform targets.

Reviewing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Productivity Commission Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

In 2024, the PC released the first comprehensive three-yearly Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the PC Review).⁵ The recommendations of the PC Review were that governments need to share power to make meaningful progress, Indigenous Data Sovereignty must be recognised and supported, mainstream systems and culture within governments should be fundamentally rethought, and stronger accountability is required to drive behaviour change.

The PC Review noted that data still needs to be reported across all of the Priority Reform targets, four of the socio-economic targets, 143 supporting indicators and all 123 data development items. The PC Review noted the scale of this task and the ambiguity in responsibility for actions, given the multiple

⁴ The Closing the Gap Data Development Plan (2022–2032) was approved by the Joint Council on Closing the Gap in August 2022. The plan can be found at www.closingthegap.gov.au/resources. The National Agreement specifies that the Data Development Plan be reviewed by Joint Council every three years at the same time as it reviews the Productivity Commission and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led reviews.

⁵ In February 2025, the Productivity Commission also made a submission to the Senate Inquiry on measuring first nations outcomes, presenting the messages and outcomes of this Review.



working groups and organisations involved. It also noted the lack of conceptual logic for some indicators.

The PC Review identified how Closing the Gap data measurement and reporting should enable and advance Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) and Indigenous Data Governance (IDG). The PC Review also identified that existing bodies and mechanisms, including the Commission, do not have the remit or governance structure to fully enable IDG and recommended the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Bureau of Indigenous Data (BoID).

On 5 July 2024, Joint Council agreed to all four key recommendations and 15 of the 16 recommended actions outlined in the PC Review. Joint Council did not agree to the establishment of the BoID but did agree to establishing a Data Policy Partnership to accelerate progress on Priority Reform 4 – Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

In the second half of 2025, the Data Policy Partnership will be established and co-chaired by NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) and a representative from the ABS.

Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led review

An independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led review is an existing commitment in the National Agreement (Joint Council 2020, clauses 125–128) that occurs after each PC Review and is an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to shape the future actions of the Priority Reforms in the National Agreement. It is independent of Government and seeks to maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as central to Closing the Gap. The first independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-Led Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap occurred was released on 20 June 2025. Refer to box 1.2 for further detail on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led review.

Box 1.2 – Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The inaugural independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap was conducted in the first half of 2025. This national initiative inquired into, documented and reported on the perspectives and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in the implementation of the Agreement.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Led Independent Review of Closing the Gap was underpinned by a self-determination framework and a strengths-based approach, emphasising the inherent capabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and recognising that they are best positioned to identify and address their needs and priorities.

A final report, Closing the Gap Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Led Review, was published in June 2025.

Twelve key findings were identified in the report. They are:

1. The Closing the Gap architecture is broadly sound but is inhibited by inaction
2. A clear imbalance of responsibilities and resourcing is impeding implementation
3. Progress across the Priority Reforms is interdependent



Box 1.2 – Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

4. The cultural load is heavy
5. Communication and education on Closing the Gap is inappropriate and insufficient
6. Governments have yet to commence any genuine transformative work
7. Accountability and transparency are critical
8. Funding reform is needed
9. Expanded efforts are needed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector
10. Racism is not being addressed
11. A return to bipartisanship at the political level is critical
12. The National Agreement is grounded in principles of global human rights standards, including self-determination and non-discrimination

The report also notes that three core themes emerged as essential to any understanding of, and approach to, and ultimately the success of Closing the Gap. The three themes are self-determination; capability building of all the Parties; and governance building framework. The report also notes that the most significant limitation for the Review was the five-month timeline provided by Joint Council to undertake what is, realistically, a 12-18 month process. Time constraints limited the Review from inception and planning stages through to final reporting.

Source: Lavarch et al. (2025).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates have changed

The ABS estimates and projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are used as the denominator for many measures used in national reporting, including several Closing the Gap targets and supporting indicators.⁶ The recently published 2021 Census-based estimates and projections showed an increase in the estimated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, compared with previous estimates (other than for the Northern Territory). The change in the ABS population estimates and projections reflects the increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Census.

Nationally, between the 2016 and 2021 Census, the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people increased by 25.2%. Less than half (43.5%) of this increase can be accounted for by demographic factors (births, deaths and migration) with the remainder due to other factors, including changes in the propensity of people to identify as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.

Some results have been revised

Since the 2024 ADCR, the PC updated the PC CtG dashboard using 2021 Census-based ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates and projections. The time-series has been recast for the

⁶ The Census is conducted by the ABS every five years. The ABS updates the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates and projections after each Census. Updates to the denominator used for national reporting can be expected to occur every five years.



relevant targets and indicators, including the baseline rates. The updated population has increased over the entire time series but has not substantially affected changes over time. The revisions impacted five Closing the Gap socio-economic targets (3, 10, 11, 12 and 14) and seven supporting indicators (1b, 1e, 10a, 11c, 12m, 13h and 13p)⁷.

The 'end point' for four targets (where the target is to achieve a percentage change from the baseline year) have been updated: Target 10 (imprisonment), Target 11 (youth detention), Target 12 (out-of-home care) and Target 14 (suicide) (table 1.4). There have been no changes to the national assessments of progress (on track/not on track) as a result but in some instances the target has changed due to the population revisions.

Table 1.4 – Changes to targets due to the population revisions

Target	2016 Census-based rates (Nov 2024 dashboard update)		2021 Census-based rates (March 2025 dashboard update)	
	Baseline	Target (end year)	Baseline	Revised target
Target 10 (per 100,000) (reduce detention rate by 10%)	4142.9 (2019)	1821.5 (by 2031)	1906.1	1620.2 (by 2031)
Target 11 (per 10,000) (reduce youth detention rate by 10%)	32.1 (2018-19)	22.3 (by 2031)	28.3	19.8 (by 2031)
Target 12 (per 1,000) (reduce rate in out-of-home care by 45%)	54.2 (2019)	29.8 (by 2031)	47.3	26.0 (by 2031)
Target 14 (per 100,000) (reduce suicide rate towards zero)	25.1 (2018) (5 juris total)	6.3 (by 2031) (5 juris total)	22.7 (5 juris total) 32.6 (6 juris total)	5.6 (5 juris total) 5.9 (6 juris total) (75% reduction by 2031)

The PC has authored and published further information on the revisions to ABS population estimates and projections used in the Closing the Gap Dashboard and the ADCR. It can be found on the Closing the Gap Information Repository under the 'explaining the data' webpage.⁸

Identification, collection, interpretation and use of data

The propensity to identify as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person is a consideration when interpreting the data. A person may choose to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person at different periods over time in the Census. This is influenced by a range of historical, cultural, political, sociological and administrative factors. How Census information is collected, who completes the form (or other data collection instrument), the perception of why the information is required and how it will be used, and cultural aspects (including safety) are other factors to consider, as well as

⁷ It should be noted that previously published results (which used the 2016 Census-based population estimates as denominators) cannot be directly compared with revised results (which use 2021 Census-based population estimates).

⁸ <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/explain/population-revisions>



contemporary and historical reasons associated with reporting as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.

It is important to remember that behind the numbers reported in this publication are individuals who have a story and who have made a decision to identify as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person when data was being collected. It is also important to hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about the data. Dr Scott Avery, a descendant of the Worimi people, of the Port Stephens and Great Lakes region of New South Wales, and professor of Indigenous disability health and wellbeing in the School of Public Health, University of Technology Sydney has shared his expert perspective on population statistics reported on the Closing the Gap dashboard and in the ADCR.



Indigenous story-telling through the data: **Surfacing the hidden histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the respectful use of data**

Dr Scott Avery

When you look at the night sky, you see the story of the universe on a grand scale. Individual stars, each with their own histories, group to form constellations. Constellations form galaxies, and galaxies combine to make up the universe. Some stars shine brightly, while others hide in dark matter out of view, even though we know that they are there.

When it comes to the histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is data that tells our stories on a grand scale. Each statistic or number in a data report can be traced back to a person – an individual star – who happened to be asked or chose to share their story with others. Even if the only way they were able to share their story was by filling in a form, or relying on someone else to fill it in, data captures a slice of their existence. Then another person chooses to tell their story. Then another. This goes on until there are enough people telling their story and it becomes a picture of a community – the constellations group together to form a galaxy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories through time.

Just as there is dark matter that exists in the universe which hides the stories of stars and constellations, in the same is true for data. The production of dark matter that sits over the data and stories is the impact of colonialism on Australian modern history. Colonialism sees the stories of some people more important than the stories of others. The telescope focused first on the stars that spoke the loudest and demanded the most attention, and those were the stories that came to be reflected in the data. Dark matter expanded and grew denser, stopping scholars and scientists from looking for other stars. But dark matter did not stop those stars from existing, even if they couldn't be seen with the naked eye.

For many centuries, colonialism had presumed ownership over the stories that came from the data. This was to the point of co-opting the stories of galaxies that they did not understand, projecting a narrative that suited their view of the universe. Stars hidden behind the dark matter wondered if it was worth shining at all.

But this appropriated and limited view is not what the fullness of the universe intended. The term 'data' has modest origins, derived from a Latin phrase that means 'something given or granted' (but not taken). Indigenous scholars are leading a renaissance in reading the data universe using a knowledge system that predates colonialism by time immortal, using a vocabulary to share Indigenous knowledges for contemporary times. There is the term 'disaggregation' that describes constellations within galaxies that show a distinct pattern when the stars were joined. Then, for the constellations that could not be, there is 'intersectionality'. Intersectionality teaches us not only that dark matter exists, but why it exists and how do we see through it.

The renaissance of Indigenous knowledge in data is packaged within the discipline of Indigenous Data Sovereignty. This is an ethical framework for the collection of data and telling of the narrative that emerges from it. For analysts and users of Indigenous data, respecting Indigenous Data Sovereignty requires users to be faithful to the data that comes from those who have granted you their story, and to acknowledge the existence of those who have, for whatever reason, chosen not to. Indigenous Data Sovereignty is not simply a set of findings, but gives you the method for getting there through a voyage of respectful co-discovery that will keep pushing the data universe to its outer limits.



2. Progress in socio-economic outcomes



2.1 Health, wellbeing and development

Health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is holistic, encompassing not just physical health but also social, emotional, cultural, spiritual and ecological wellbeing for individuals and communities (Dudgeon et al. 2014). This perspective reflects a strong sense of cultural identity and deep connections to Country, culture, family, kinship and community that are essential to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing.⁹

Colonisation and government policies have disrupted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of living and suppressed cultural practices and expression, leading to harmful effects on wellbeing (Dudgeon et al. 2014; Lowitja Institute 2020). The ongoing trauma and marginalisation resulting from colonisation continues to affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing through a range of interrelated stressors. These include the presence and impact of institutional racism and discrimination in mainstream services as well as social and economic inequalities such as access to adequate housing, education, income and employment. The result is higher health risk factors (AIHW 2022c; Gubhaju et al. 2015; Menzies 2019).

Social and emotional wellbeing encompasses many foundational and interconnected dimensions including: autonomy, empowerment and recognition; family and community; culture, spirituality and identity; Country; basic needs; work, roles and responsibilities; education; physical health; and mental health (Butler et al. 2019; Dudgeon et al. 2014; Sutherland and Adams 2019). While social and emotional wellbeing and mental health are distinct, a decline in mental health is associated with an increased risk of self-harm and death by suicide (Dudgeon et al. 2014; Moitra et al. 2021; Whiteford et al. 2013).

Strengthening and investing in the health of children in the prenatal and early childhood periods can have positive and long-lasting impacts for wellbeing (AIHW 2011a). A baby's health and wellbeing are closely linked to those of their mother and the surrounding environment (Comino et al. 2012; Healing Foundation 2020). As such, maintaining cultural practices and ties to community and Country and ensuring family support can play a crucial role in promoting the wellbeing of mothers, babies and children (AIHW 2024c; Dudgeon et al. 2014; Healing Foundation 2020).

The unique protective factors found in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, such as connection to land, spirituality, ancestry, family and community, are sources of strength and resilience (Dudgeon et al. 2014; Sutherland and Adams 2019). Strengthening and restoring protective factors can improve health outcomes and the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Dudgeon et al. 2014; Kelly 2009).

⁹ It should also be acknowledged that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people exist in many diverse nations, cultures and language groups, with many perspectives – meaning that not all families and communities will share the exact same concepts of health and wellbeing.



Box 2.1 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available in 2025 for socio-economic outcomes 1, 2, 4 and 14.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives	
• Life expectancy (Target 1)	2020–22
• Leading causes of death (1b)*#	2019–23
• Potentially avoidable mortality (1c)**#	2022–23
• Health risk factors (1d)*	2022–23
• Access/use of health services (1e)*#	2023–24
Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong	
• Healthy birthweight (Target 2)*	2022
• Mothers who smoke during pregnancy (2a)*	2022
• Use of antenatal care (2d)*	2022
Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years	
• Childhood development (Target 4)*	2024
• AEDC Multiple Strengths Indicator (4d)*	2024
Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing	
• Suicide rates (Target 14)*#^	2023
• Hospitalisations for self-harm (14a)**	2022–23
• Psychological distress (14d)*	2022–23
• Barriers accessing health services (14e)*	2022–23
• Experience of racism (14g)	2022

Note: *Indicates where a new year of data has been published since the 2024 ADCR. **Indicates a new supporting indicator since the 2024 ADCR. #Indicates revised historical data due to updates in population estimates and projections. ^Revised target due to updates in population estimates and projections. Data considerations are provided in box 2.2, box 2.5 and box 2.6.



Outcome 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives

Life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is improving but the target to close the gap by 2031 is not on track to be met¹⁰

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people born in 2020–2022 are expected to live to 71.9 years (males) and 75.6 years (females).¹¹ This is higher than the estimates of life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people born in 2005–2007. The estimated life expectancy gap was lower in 2020–2022 than in 2005–2007, but the target to close the gap by 2031 is not on track to be met (box 2.2).

Box 2.2 – Data considerations: use caution when comparing life expectancy or mortality rates over time

The data used to assess progress for this target is updated every five years and is sourced from ABS estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy.

Caution is required when interpreting trends in life expectancy estimates and mortality rates. The ABS does not compare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy estimates or mortality rates over time. Increases in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, and improvements to identification of Indigenous status in death records, have contributed to changes in the life expectancy estimates. It is not possible to determine the extent to which population changes and/or improved health outcomes have contributed to changes in the life expectancy estimates.

Life expectancy and mortality data are only available for New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, which are the jurisdictions with sufficient Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification to support analysis. In addition, mortality data is available for South Australia.

For further details, please refer to the data quality considerations section in the technical specifications available on the dashboard.

Source: ABS (2023a).

Life expectancy is improving across most jurisdictions

While there are currently no state and territory targets, the progress made in each state and territory does contribute to national outcomes. Estimates of male and female life expectancy were higher for people born in 2020–2022 across all jurisdictions with available data, than life expectancy estimates for people born in 2005–2007 (baseline), except for females in the Northern Territory.

¹⁰ The most recent progress assessment for Closing the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031 (Target 1), was completed in 2024, using 2020–2022 data. You will find more information (including figures) on the progress of assessment towards this target on the PC CtG dashboard and pages 16–17 of the 2024 ADCR.

¹¹ This report uses the terms 'male' and 'female' to refer to data disaggregated by sex. Data disaggregated by gender is not yet available for this indicator. For more information on gender and sex in the ADCR, refer to box 1.1.



State and territory assessment of progress (2005–2007 to 2020–2022)^a

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
1 (Males)	→	••	→	→	••	••	••	→
1 (Females)	→	••	→	→	••	••	••	←

Legend	→	←	▤	••
	Improvement	Worsening	No change	No assessment

a. The assessments should be used with caution as they are based on a limited number of data points.

Building a fuller picture of life expectancy

Annual supporting indicator data can help interpret progress toward a target. Life expectancy increases with a reduction in mortality rates (Indicator 1b), especially at younger ages or for preventable causes (Indicator 1c). These gains in life expectancy are closely linked to improvements in protective health factors and reductions in health risk factors (Indicator 1d), as well as better access to culturally safe, timely and quality health care (Indicator 1e).

Mortality rates are increasing for most age groups

Mortality rates by leading cause of death – Indicator 1b – provide further insight into trends in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.^{12,13} Mortality rates for most age groups (except people aged less than one year and 25–29 years) increased from 2014–2018 to 2019–2023 (figure 2.1). Trends for this indicator should be interpreted with a degree of caution as outlined in box 2.2 (above) and data availability noted in figure 2.1.

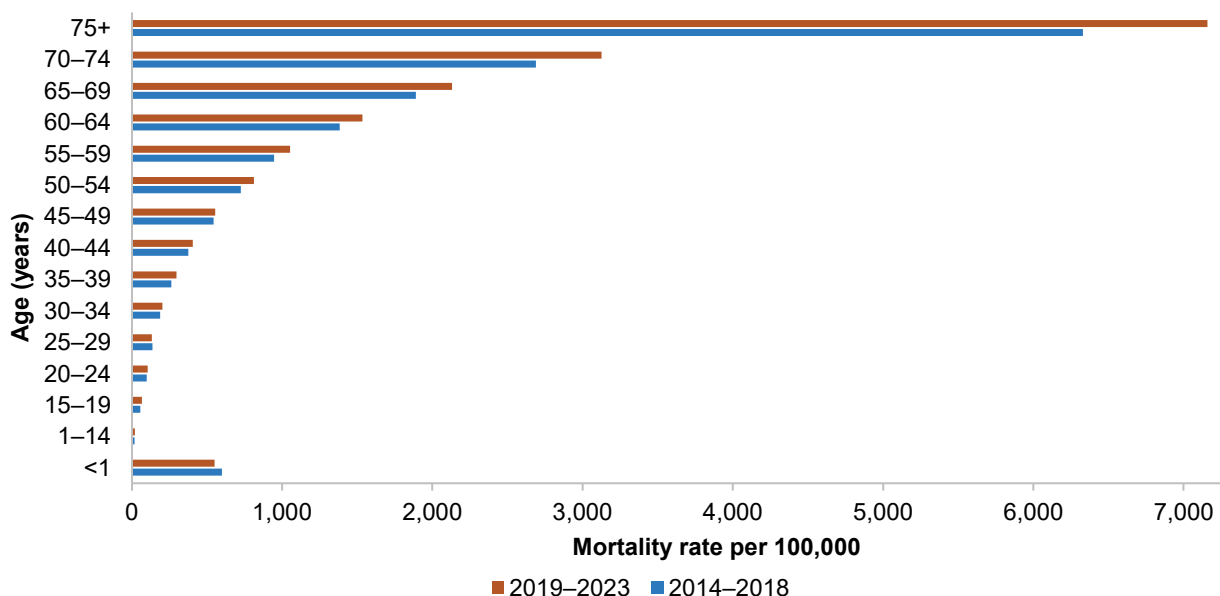
¹² Indicator 1b includes three measures for the leading causes of death in different populations: infant mortality, child mortality and adult mortality by five-yearly age groups.

¹³ Mortality rate is the number of deaths in a population, scaled to the size of the population.



Figure 2.1 – Mortality rates^{a,b,c}

All-cause mortality rates per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by age cohort, 2014–2018 and 2019–2023 (Indicator 1b)



a. Data is only available for New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. **b.** Mortality rates for infants (children less than one year) are deaths per 100,000 live births, noting they have been rescaled from the mortality rates per 1,000 live births shown on the PC CtG dashboard. Mortality rates for other age cohorts are deaths per 100,000 people. **c.** Caution is required when interpreting trends in this data due to revised population estimates and recent changes to the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in reported deaths across jurisdictions.

Source: Derived from ABS (unpublished) Causes of Death Australia. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE1b.1.

Persistent leading cause of death across most age groups

The leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remained largely the same across most age groups, although the rates associated with these causes changed for some groups between 2014–2018 and 2019–2023 (following table).

Age group	Leading cause of death
Infants (aged under 1 year)	Conditions originating in the perinatal period remained the leading cause of death, with rates declining from 3.4 to 2.9 deaths per 1,000 live births.
Children aged 1–14 years	Land-transport accidents continued to be the leading cause of death, with rates increasing from 3.2 to 4.2 deaths per 100,000 children.
People aged 15–39 years	Self-harm was the most frequent cause of death, with rates declining among young adults 15–24 years but increasing for people aged 25–39 years.
People aged 40–74 years	Ischemic heart disease continued to be the leading cause of death, with mortality rates increasing for most age cohorts, except for people aged 45–49 years, 60–64 years and 65–69 years.
People aged 75 years or over	Dementia overtook ischemic heart disease with 819.7 deaths per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2019–2023.



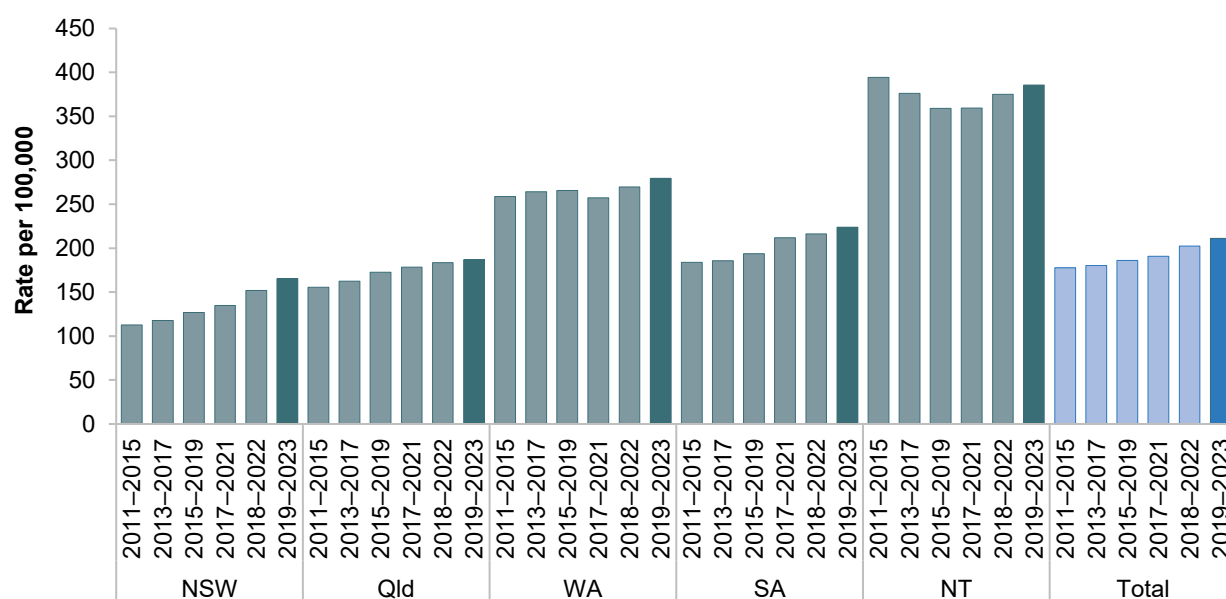
Avoidable mortality is on the rise for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Avoidable mortality refers to deaths from preventable or treatable conditions such as diabetes, heart failure, asthma as well as transport accidents and assault. Reductions in potentially avoidable mortality can lead to increases in life expectancy. Data is now reported for potentially avoidable mortality under Indicator 1c.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged under 75 years old in selected jurisdictions (New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory) combined, rates of potentially avoidable mortality have been rising between 2011–2015 and 2019–2023 (figure 2.2). Most jurisdictions with available data have seen steadily rising rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged under 75 years old. In the Northern Territory, rates have risen since the low levels seen over 2014–18 to 2017–2021, but have not returned to baseline levels.

Figure 2.2 – Potentially avoidable mortality for selected jurisdictions combined^{a,b}

Rate per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under 75 years old for selected years (Indicator 1c)



a. Selected jurisdictions include New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Mortality rates are not produced at the jurisdiction level for Tasmania, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, due to small numbers reported in these jurisdictions. **b.** Caution is required when interpreting trends in this data due to revised population estimates and enhancements in the methodology to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in reported deaths across jurisdictions. Refer to box 2.2 for more information.

Source: Derived from ABS Causes of Death Australia (2024). Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE1c.1.

Between 2011–2015 and 2019–2023, the gap in age-standardised potentially avoidable mortality rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people has widened for the Australian total. This is based on combined data for selected jurisdictions (New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory).



Some personal risk factors that promote holistic health and wellbeing are improving

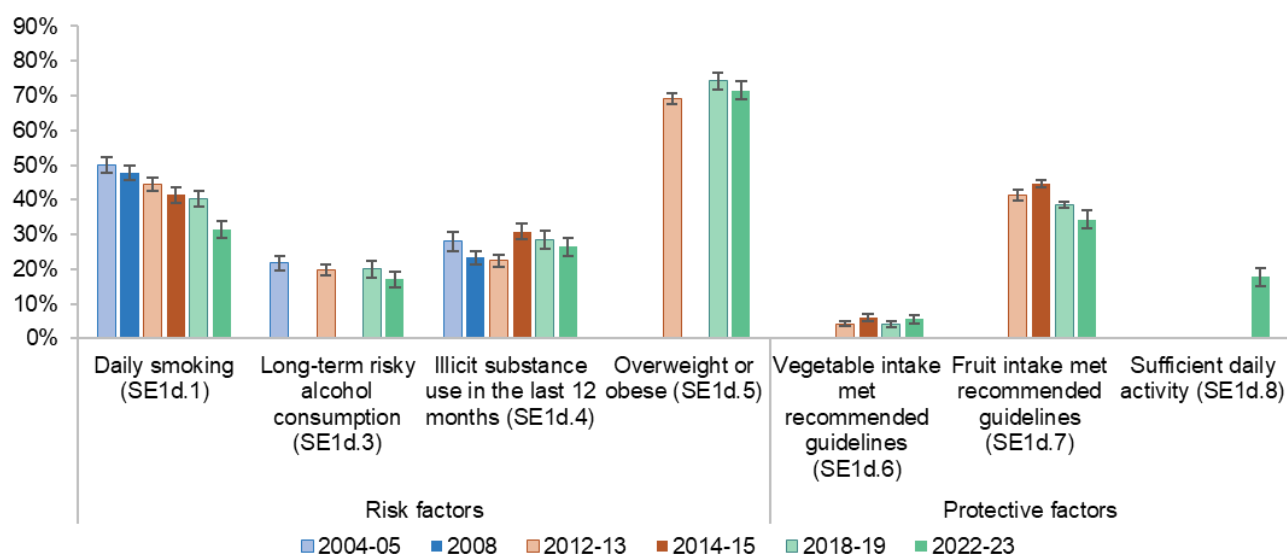
Strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors – recorded under Indicator 1d – can promote holistic health and wellbeing, ultimately supporting a longer and healthier life.

There has been some improvement in the reported personal health risk factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults aged 18 years or over (figure 2.3). Between 2004-05 and 2022-23, the rate of daily smoking declined by about 19 percentage points, reaching 31.4% in 2022-23. Over the same period, illicit drug use remained unchanged, but long-term risky alcohol consumption (2009 NHMRC guidelines) declined. Nationally in 2022-23, 36.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults reported exceeding the lifetime alcohol risk consumption (2020 NHMRC guidelines).

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults aged 18 years or over who are overweight or obese did not change between 2012-13 and 2022-23. Over the same period, vegetable consumption remained stable but fewer people are meeting the recommended daily fruit intake. In 2022-23, 17.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in non-remote areas reported doing sufficient daily activity, based on the latest guidelines, which now include activity done at work.

Figure 2.3 – Personal protective factors and risk factors nationally^{a,b,c,d,e}

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 18 years or over who reported engaging in risky or protective behaviours (Indicator 1d)



a. For SE1d.3 – The data on the long-term risk level of alcohol consumption is based on 2009 NHMRC guidelines. Data for 2008 and 2014-15 is not reported as it is not directly comparable with the data from other periods. Data based on 2020 NHMRC guidelines for 2022-23 is available in table SE1d.2. **b.** For SE1d.6 – The data for the Australian Capital Territory in 2012-13 is not publishable because the estimate is considered unreliable for general use. **c.** For SE1d.7 – The relative standard errors for Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory in 2018-19 are 50% or greater. These estimates are considered unreliable for general use. **d.** For SE1d.8 – Physical activity data is applicable to persons aged 18 years or over in non-remote areas only. Data for 2022-23 includes workplace physical activity. Data for 2018-19, which excludes workplace physical activity, is available in table SE1d.9. **e.** Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: ABS (unpublished) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (2012-13); ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (2004-05, 2018-19 and 2022-23); ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (2008 and 2014-15). Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables SE1d.1-8.



Health service use shows minimal gains in health assessments with falling use of General Practitioner and chronic disease management services

Use of healthcare services that are culturally safe and community-led can improve wellbeing and life expectancy. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people access health care in a range of ways, including annual health checks through Aboriginal Medical Services and General Practitioners (GPs) to support early detection and management of health conditions. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also use non-referred GP visits – appointments that do not require a specialist referral – for general health concerns, along with chronic disease management services that support coordinated and chronic care, including for people with conditions like kidney disease or cardiovascular disease.¹⁴

Nationally, there has been some progress in health care use for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but the overall picture remains mixed. From the baseline year in 2016-17 to 2023-24, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific health assessments increased, but overall uptake remains low, with about one in four (251.3 per 1,000) people receiving one assessment in 2023-24 (figure 2.4).¹⁵ From 2016-17 to 2022-23, access to non-referred GP services and chronic disease care services, including General Practitioner Management Plans and Team Care Arrangements, decreased. It is not possible to tell from the data alone whether this decline reflects reduced access to health care, or a reduced need for these services. The COVID-19 pandemic also disrupted access to health care and service use has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

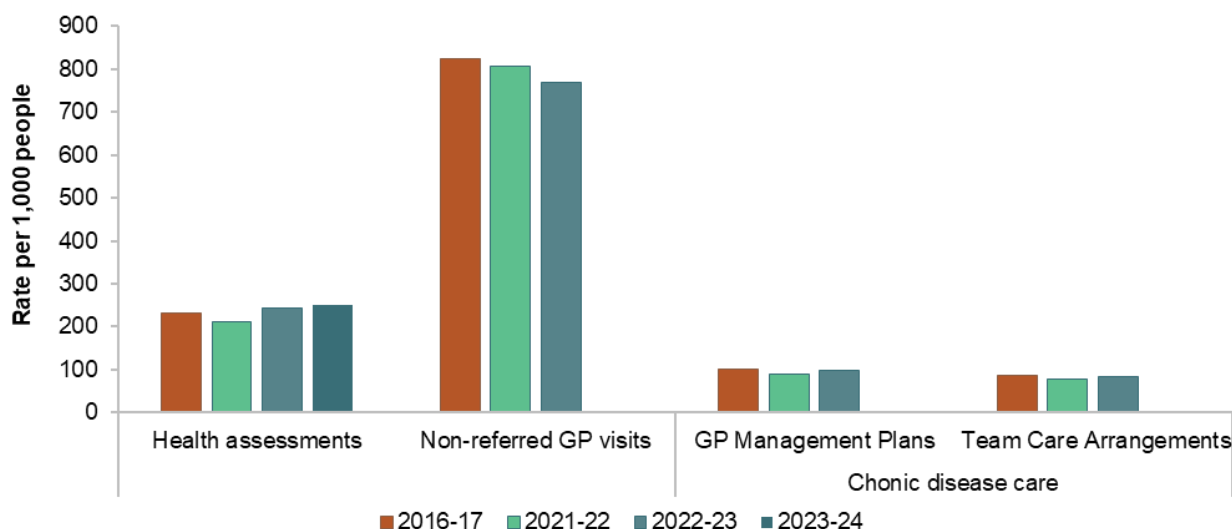
¹⁴ The available data – recorded in Indicator 1e – reports on use of these services but it is important to recognise that it does not capture all forms of care and support, such as health checks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people outside of Medicare and services provided by Aboriginal and Community-Controlled Health Organisations.

¹⁵ The number of health assessments may be underestimated due to a lack of awareness of the specific Medicare Benefits Schedule item number for recording Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific health checks and the fact that some people may receive a health check outside Medicare.



Figure 2.4 – National rate of health assessments, GP visits and chronic disease care items^a

Rate of Medicare item utilisation per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comparing recent years (2021–2024) to the baseline (2016–2017) (Indicator 1e)



a. Health assessments refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific health assessments. **b.** The 2023-24 data for non-referred GP visits and the chronic disease care items was not available.

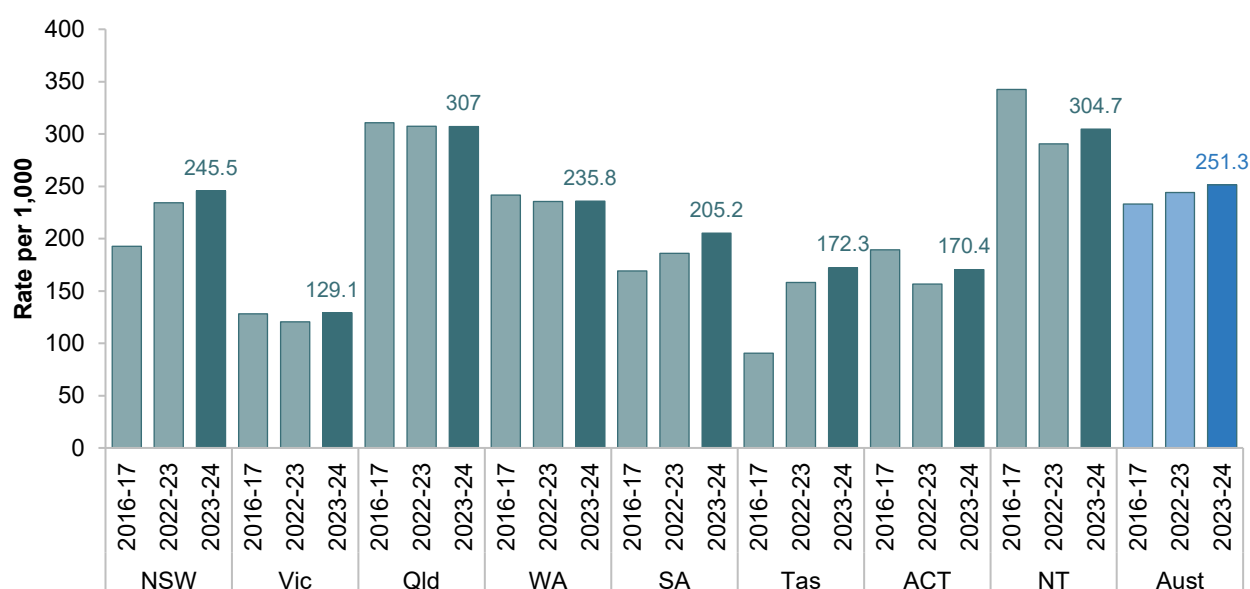
Source: Derived from AIHW (unpublished) Medicare Benefits Schedule data (AIHW analyses); ABS Estimates and Projections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables SE1e.1–3.

While the national rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific health assessments remains low, it varies significantly across jurisdictions (figure 2.5). In 2023-24, Victoria had the lowest uptake, with about one in eight people assessed. Northern Territory had the highest uptake, with about three in ten people assessed, but also saw the largest decline since 2016-17 (the baseline year).



Figure 2.5 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health assessments, by jurisdiction

Rate of Medicare item utilisation per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comparing recent years (2022–2024) to the baseline (2016–17) (Indicator 1e)



Source: Derived from Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (unpublished) Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) statistics; ABS Estimates and Projections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE1e.2.

Fewer people in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are visiting the GP for standard consultations, with a decline observed across all states and territories. Nationally, the rate fell from about four in five people in 2016-17 (the baseline year) to just under four in five (769.3 per 1,000 people) in 2022-23. In New South Wales where the largest decline occurred since the baseline year, the rate fell to 805.6 per 1,000 people in 2022-23. The Northern Territory saw the smallest decrease, maintaining the lowest rate of visiting the GP for standard consultations across all jurisdictions at 668.4 per 1,000 people in 2022-23.

Box 2.3 – Supporting improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care access

Supporting access to healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requires both sufficient supply of quality care services, and an ability for people to utilise those services. Service utilisation may be influenced by affordability, physical accessibility, individual need, and the cultural safety and acceptability of the services available.

Factors which support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access and engage with healthcare services, include:

- resourcing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) to deliver holistic, comprehensive care that meets the unique cultural, health and wellbeing needs of the community
- improving the availability of high quality, culturally safe primary health and specialist services, for people who live in rural, regional and remote areas



Box 2.3 – Supporting improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care access

- addressing racism and discrimination in mainstream health services to build trust, improve patient experiences and optimise the quality of care delivered
- empowering communities to engage in health promotion, and advocacy for action across all determinants of health and wellbeing.

Source: Alford (2014); Gomersall et al. (2017); Lowitja Institute (2022); Marrie and Bukal Consultancy Services (2017); NACCHO (2021, 2024); Nolan-Isles et al. (2021); Watego et al. (2021).

Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong









A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies are being born at a healthy birthweight but the target is not on track to be met by 2031





The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies born at a healthy birthweight is increasing but the target of 91% with a healthy birthweight by 2031 (Target 2) is not on track to be met. 89.2% of the 18,647 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children born in 2022 were of healthy birthweight, down from 89.6% in 2021, but up from 88.8% in 2017.

Healthy birthweight is improving across most jurisdictions

Nationally, the overall increase over the five-year period was driven by improvements in five jurisdictions – Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. The Australian Capital Territory showed the largest increase, at 5.1 percentage points. The proportion of healthy birthweights showed little change in New South Wales (0.1 percentage point increase over the period), however, a decline was observed in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

State and territory assessment of progress (2017 to 2022)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
2								
Confidence level	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Low

Legend	 Improvement	 Worsening	 No change	 No assessment
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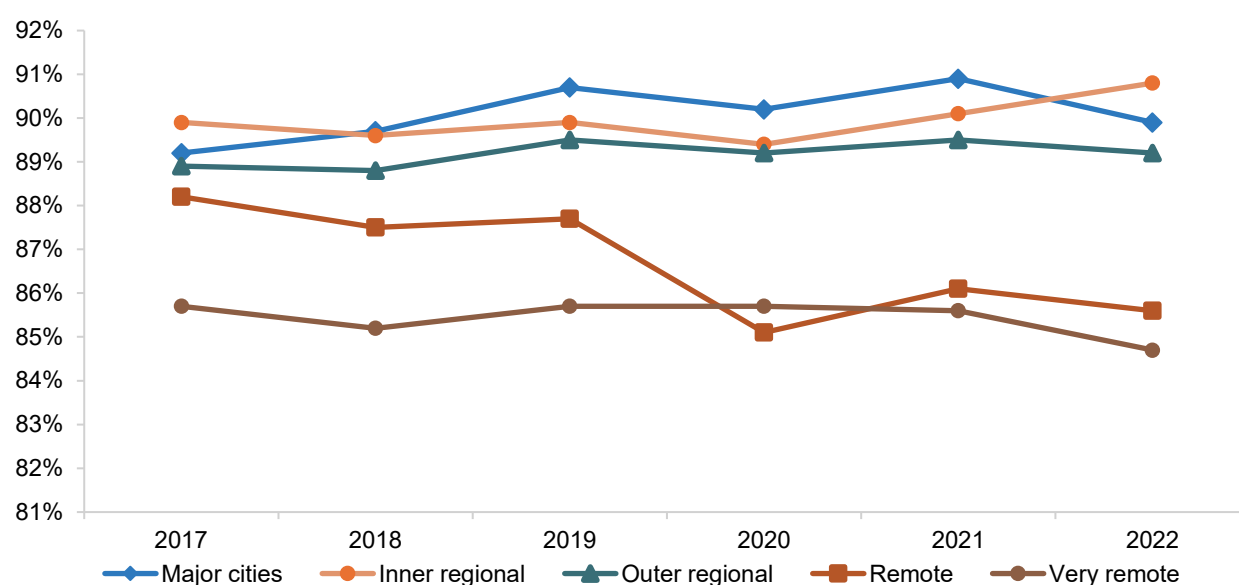
Note: These assessments of progress are provided with a 'High' or 'Low' level of confidence. An assessment reported with a 'High' level of confidence is considered to be more reliable than one reported with a 'Low' level of confidence. Please see the Glossary in this report or 'How to interpret the data' page on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.



The proportion of healthy birthweights increased from 89.9% in 2017 to 90.8% in 2022 in inner regional areas, but remained relatively stable in outer regional areas, major cities and very remote areas. In remote areas, the proportion of healthy birthweights decreased from 88.2% to 85.6% between 2017 and 2022 (figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait babies born at a healthy birthweight by remoteness

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander live-born singleton babies born at a birthweight between 2,500–4,499g (Target 2)



Source: AIHW (unpublished) National Perinatal Data Collection. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG2A.3.

Rising rates of early antenatal care and falling smoking rates during pregnancy

New data for smoking during pregnancy (Indicator 2a) shows that in 2022, 40.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who gave birth reported smoking at any time during pregnancy. The rate of smoking at any time during pregnancy decreased by approximately 4 percentage points since the baseline year (2017), with the largest decrease between 2020 and 2021 (from 43.4% to 41.6%)

New data for the use of antenatal care shows a notable increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women receiving antenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy, rising to 71.5% in 2022 from 63.5% in the baseline year (2017). Over recent years, there has been stability in the proportion of women who gave birth at 32 weeks or more gestation and attended five or more antenatal visits (measure 2d.1). Some key factors in improving pregnancy outcomes are outlined in box 2.4.

Box 2.4 – Early and ongoing culturally responsive antenatal care is key to improving pregnancy outcomes

Culturally responsive and appropriate antenatal health services are crucial to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong.

The first antenatal visit is important as it involves assessing physical, social and emotional health, providing advice and identifying if additional care or support is needed. Providing ongoing access to



Box 2.4 – Early and ongoing culturally responsive antenatal care is key to improving pregnancy outcomes

antenatal care in community-controlled settings throughout pregnancy can address language and cultural barriers, as well as experiences of racism and discrimination.

Enabling birthing on Country, a culturally significant practice, provides holistic care for healing intergenerational trauma. This practice promotes maternal social and emotional wellbeing, serving as a protective factor against low birthweight.

Racism is a particular issue affecting appropriate antenatal care, as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers hold fears their baby will be removed from them by child protection. This fear is well-grounded given the high number of reports to child protection involving unborn babies of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers in mainstream services. These reports often stem from racism and systemic biases within the health system and frequently lead to the removal of babies.

Source: DoHAC (2020); Healing Foundation (2018); Hine et al. (2023); Kildea et al. (2019); Sivertsen et al. (2020) and Yoorook Justice Commission (2023).

Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years

A lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have been assessed as developmentally on track and the target is not on track to be met by 2031

Nationally in 2024, 33.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children commencing school were assessed as being developmentally on track in all five Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) domains¹⁶. This is a decline from 35.2% in 2018 (the baseline year). The outcomes for this target are not heading in the right direction. The target of 55% is not on track to be met by 2031.¹⁷

Box 2.5 – Data considerations: AEDC-based measures and relevance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

The AEDC is a population-based measure of child development, completed by educators every three years during the child's first year of full-time school. Data are collected across five domains:

- physical health and wellbeing
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive skills (school-based)
- communication skills and general knowledge.

¹⁶ Please note that the AEDC is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education. The analysis reported based on the AEDC data are those of the Productivity Commission and should not be attributed to the Department of Education.

¹⁷ The target year is 2031, however the AEDC is currently only collected every three years. Progress assessment can be expected in 2031 using 2030 data. Data for the target year will not be available before 2033.



Box 2.5 – Data considerations: AEDC-based measures and relevance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

The AEDC has been shown to be appropriate for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. However, as a developmental measurement tool based on a Western paradigm, it may not fully demonstrate the progress and strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The AEDC Multiple Strengths Indicator (MSI) – Indicator 4d – measures strengths in children regardless of whether they are developmentally on track in all five AEDC domains. This measure is yet to be validated for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The MSI is based primarily on responses from the social competence and emotional maturity domains but draws on all five AEDC domains. It uses 39 questions to calculate a score between 0 and 39 for each child. Children are grouped into three categories:

- highly developed strengths (score 28 to 39), children are likely developmentally on track across all domains
- well-developed strengths (score 19 to 27), children show strengths in areas like peer relationships, self-control and curiosity
- emerging strengths (score 0 to 18), children may be meeting milestones but show fewer strengths at school entry.













MSI results can be compared over cycles however it is not possible to determine if changes are significant as the critical difference has not yet been developed for MSI. Further exploration of the application of the AEDC and the MSI within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research would support future assessments of progress towards this outcome.

Source: DoE (2025a); Silburn et al. (2009); SNAICC et al. (2023).

Decline in the proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track across most jurisdictions

While there are currently no state and territory targets, the progress made in each state and territory does contribute to the national outcomes. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children commencing school who were assessed as developmentally on track across all five AEDC domains declined between 2018 and 2024 in all jurisdictions except Victoria and Queensland, where it increased, and South Australia, where it remained stable.

State and territory assessment of progress (2018 to 2024)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
4								
Legend	 Improvement		 Worsening		 No change		 No assessment	

Note: The assessments should be used with caution as they are based on a limited number of data points.



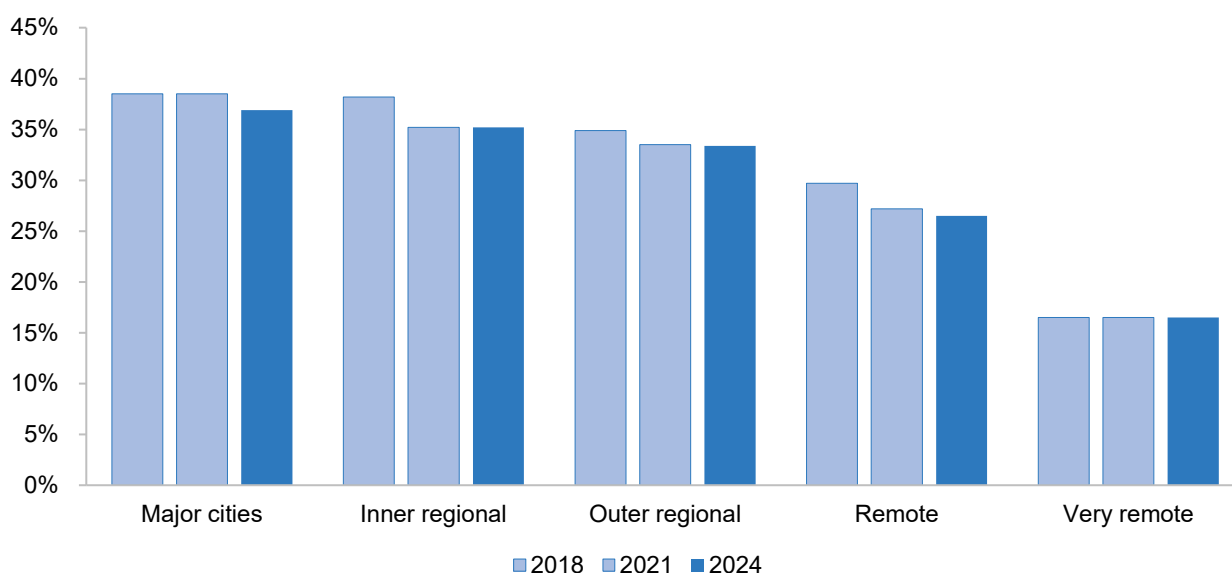
The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track when commencing school declined across most groups between 2018 (the baseline year) and 2024. The decline was similar for female and male children (less than two percentage points), and occurred in major cities, inner and outer regional areas, and remote areas. Very remote areas recorded similar results (16.5%) between 2018 and 2024 (figure 2.7). Over the same period, the proportion assessed as developmentally on track declined among children living in more disadvantaged communities, while it increased slightly for children in the 40% least disadvantaged areas.

In 2024, a higher proportion of female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were assessed as developmentally on track (41.0%) compared to male children (26.5%). In 2024, the national proportion declined with increasing remoteness, with the largest decrease from remote (26.5%) to very remote areas (16.5%) (figure 2.7). The proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track in 2024 was highest in least disadvantaged areas (48.1%) and steadily decreased as disadvantage increased, with 26.2% of children assessed as developmentally on track in the most disadvantaged areas.

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are starting school with identified developmental needs. Nationally, the proportion with a medically diagnosed special need rose from 6.4% in 2018 to 10.7% in 2024. Over the same period, the proportion identified by teachers as requiring further assessment for a developmental difficulty affecting their ability to do schoolwork in a regular classroom increased from 24.3% to 33.2%.

Figure 2.7 – Children assessed as developmentally on track^a

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the AEDC by remoteness area, 2018 to 2024 (Target 4)



a. Children are assessed as developmentally on track across five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based), and communication skills and general knowledge.

Source: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG4A.4.



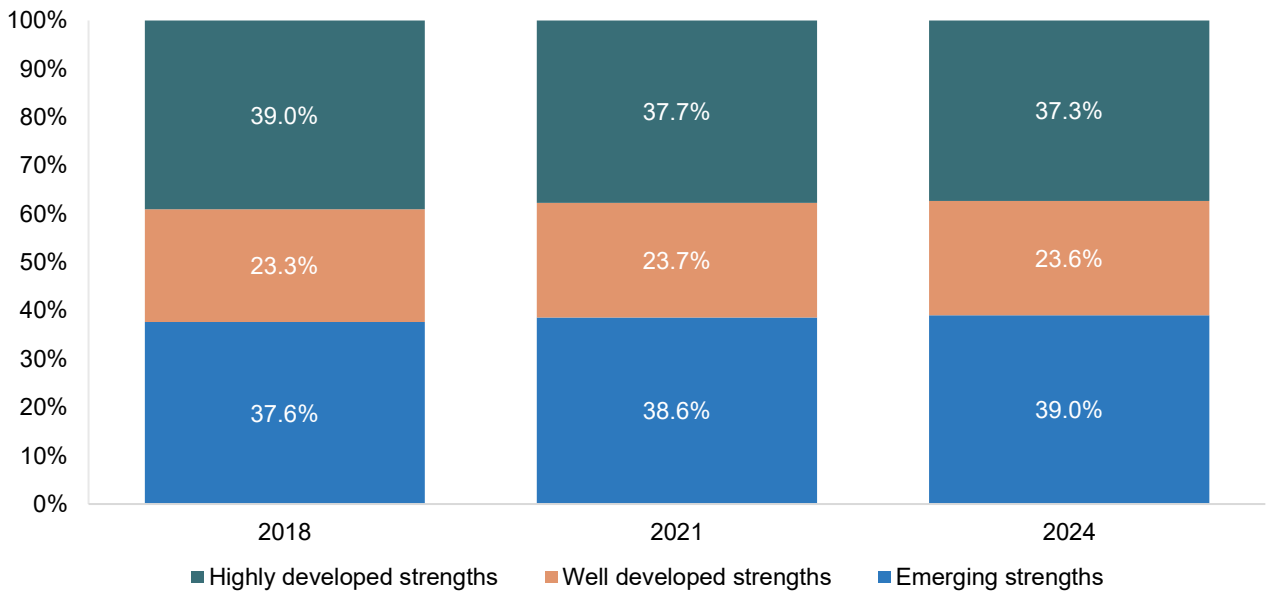
The proportion of children assessed as having highly developed strengths has declined

The supporting indicator currently reported for this outcome area – AEDC Multiple Strengths Indicator – measures strengths in children irrespective of whether they are or are not developmentally on track in all five AEDC domains (data quality considerations are outlined in box 2.5).

In 2024, 37.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children commencing school were assessed as having highly developed strengths, which is down from 39% in 2018 (figure 2.8). Over the same period, the proportion assessed as having well developed strengths increased slightly (0.3 percentage points) and the share assessed as having emerging strengths increased by 1.4 percentage points, reaching 39% in 2024.

Figure 2.8 – AEDC Multiple Strengths Indicator^a

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the first year of full-time schooling assessed in the AEDC as having highly developed, well developed and emerging strengths, 2018 to 2024 (Indicator 4d)



a. The Multiple Strengths Indicator (MSI) is a strengths-based measure that provides information on children’s developmental strengths as they commence full-time school. It uses 39 questions to calculate a score between 0 and 39 for each child. Children with scores 28 to 39 are classified as having highly developed strengths, 19 to 27 as having well-developed strengths and 0 to 18 as having emerging strengths.

Source: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE4d.1.



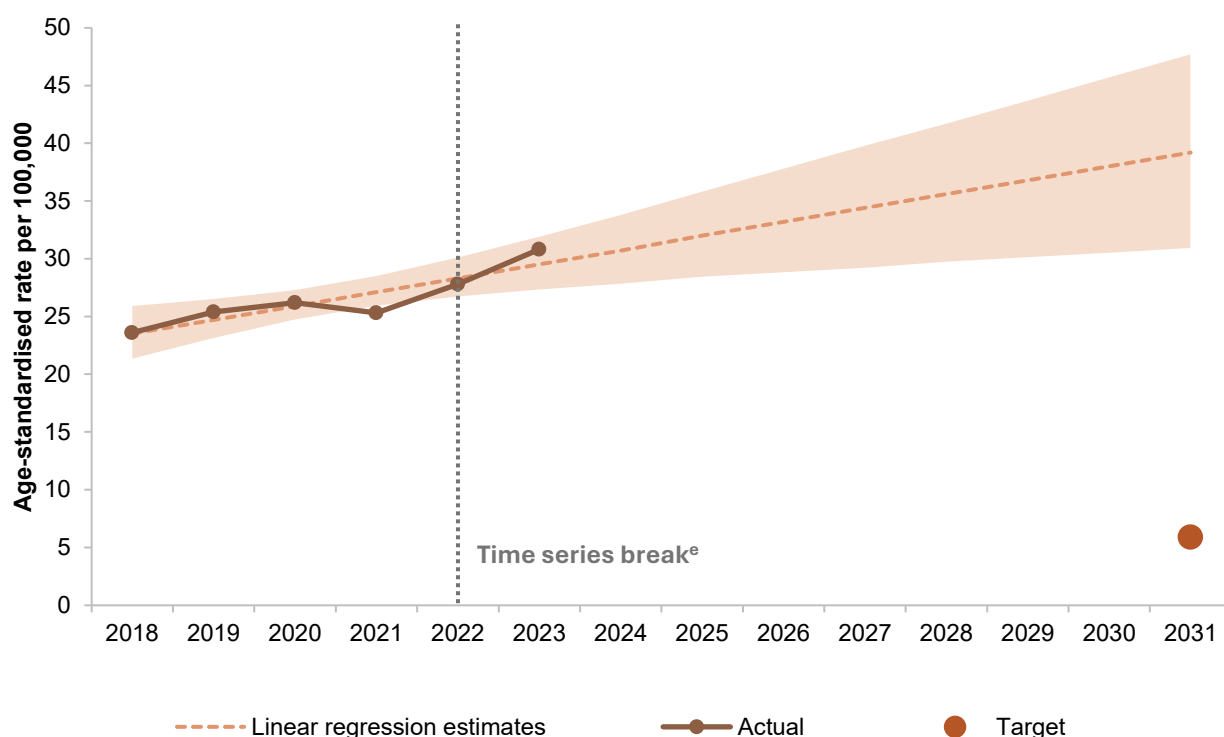
Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

The target for a significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero is not on track to be met

In 2023, 265 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died from suicide in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory – an increase from 196 people in the baseline year of 2018. The age-adjusted suicide rate rose to 30.8 per 100,000 people in 2023 from 23.6 per 100,000 people in 2018 (figure 2.9 and box 2.6). The increase in the suicide rate means the target for a significant and sustained reduction in suicide towards zero is not on track to be met.

Figure 2.9 – Suicide rate per 100,000 people^{a,b,c,d}

Age-standardised suicide rate per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 2018 to 2023 (Target 14)



a. The data presented is for New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory combined only, in line with national reporting guidelines for this target. **b.** The shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals for the linear regression estimates. **c.** As ABS population figures have increased over the entire time series, assessments of change over time are not substantially affected. There have been no changes to the national assessments of progress (on track/not on track) as a result of the updated populations. **d.** Caution is required when interpreting trends in this data due to revised population estimates and enhancements in the methodology to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in reported deaths across jurisdictions. Refer to box 2.6 for more information. **e.** From 2022, the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death was introduced for derivation of Indigenous status in New South Wales.

Source: Derived from ABS (unpublished) Causes of Death Australia. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG14A.1.




Data limitations prevent assessment of progress towards eliminating suicide across jurisdictions


Progress made in each state and territory contributes to national outcomes and in most instances progress can be assessed across jurisdictions. For Target 14, state and territory assessments of progress cannot be provided as single-year data for each jurisdiction is not currently available (refer to box 2.6 for data quality considerations). The most recent five-year aggregate data for 2019–2023 shows that Western Australia had the highest rate of deaths by suicide with 35.2 people per 100,000 and New South Wales had the lowest with 21.7 per 100,000 people. Queensland recorded the highest number of deaths by suicide in 2019–2023, with 329 out of 11,164 deaths (28.3%) across the six jurisdictions with available data in that period.


State and territory assessment of progress


Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
14	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●

Legend

Improvement

Worsening

No change

No assessment

Box 2.6 – Data considerations: use caution when comparing deaths from suicide over time

The data used to assess progress for this target is updated each year. The data includes a total based on single-year estimates across six jurisdictions (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory). Five-year aggregates are provided for point-in-time comparisons for jurisdictions and across age groups and remoteness areas.

Caution is required when comparing this report with earlier ADCR releases. There have been two changes of note for data relating to Target 14 - information from Victoria has been newly included and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population rates have been revised down, following the release of 2021 Census, which recorded an increase in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Care is needed when comparing deaths by suicide over time as changes to how causes of death are classified and improvements to identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status may affect comparability. The introduction of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) at different times across jurisdictions has led to increases in the number of reported deaths of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people, and a corresponding decrease in the number of deaths where the Indigenous status is unknown or not stated. These changes were introduced in New South Wales from 2022, Victoria from 2018, Queensland from 2015 and the remaining states and territories from 2007. Increasing rates may reflect improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification within administrative data, rather than changes in deaths by suicide.

For further details, please refer to the data quality considerations section in the technical specifications available on the dashboard.

Source: ABS (2024) and AIHW (2025b).



In 2019–2023, suicide was the leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–39 years, including all five-year age groups within that range. While the detailed suicide rate data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is grouped slightly different, it shows that people aged 25–34 years had the highest rate of death by suicide (figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10 – Rates of suicide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2019–2023

18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years
43.5 per 100,000	50.3 per 100,000	48.0 per 100,000

Deaths by suicide are higher for males than females, with a steeper rise among males

Suicide rates remain higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females. In 2023, in selected jurisdictions (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory) combined, age-adjusted death rates by suicide for males were 3.5 times higher than for females – 48.5 per 100,000 males and 13.8 per 100,000 females in 2023. This is an increase for both groups from 2018 with a larger rise for males, from 36.6 per 100,000 males and 10.8 per 100,000 females.

Among children and adolescents aged 5–17 years the pattern shifts. In 2019–2023, females in this age group had slightly higher rates of death by suicide (6.9 per 100,000) than males (5.2 per 100,000).

In 2019–2023, the death rate by suicide was highest among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 35–44 years (76.5 per 100,000)	In 2019–2023, the death rate by suicide was highest among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 18–24 years (28.6 per 100,000)
--	--

Death rates by suicide are increasing across all geographic areas and tend to rise with remoteness. In 2019–2023, the death rate by suicide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males was 49.9 per 100,000 in remote and very remote areas and 35.3 per 100,000 in major cities. The same geographic pattern was seen among females, with a death rate by suicide of 17.9 per 100,000 females in remote and very remote areas and 12.0 per 100,000 females in major cities.

Building a fuller picture of social and emotional wellbeing

Progress towards the target of reducing deaths by suicide helps to indicate whether people are experiencing greater degrees of social and emotional wellbeing. Other indicators can help build a picture of social and emotional wellbeing. Supporting indicators provide important context. Hospitalisations from self-harm (Indicator 14a) reflect serious distress, and high levels of psychological distress (Indicator 14d) highlight broader mental health challenges. Access to health professionals, including doctors, counsellors and other health professionals (Indicator 14e) or the reasons for not accessing them, highlight barriers that can prevent people from getting support when needed. Experiences of racism are also captured (Indicator 14g), given the serious negative impact of racism on mental health and wellbeing.



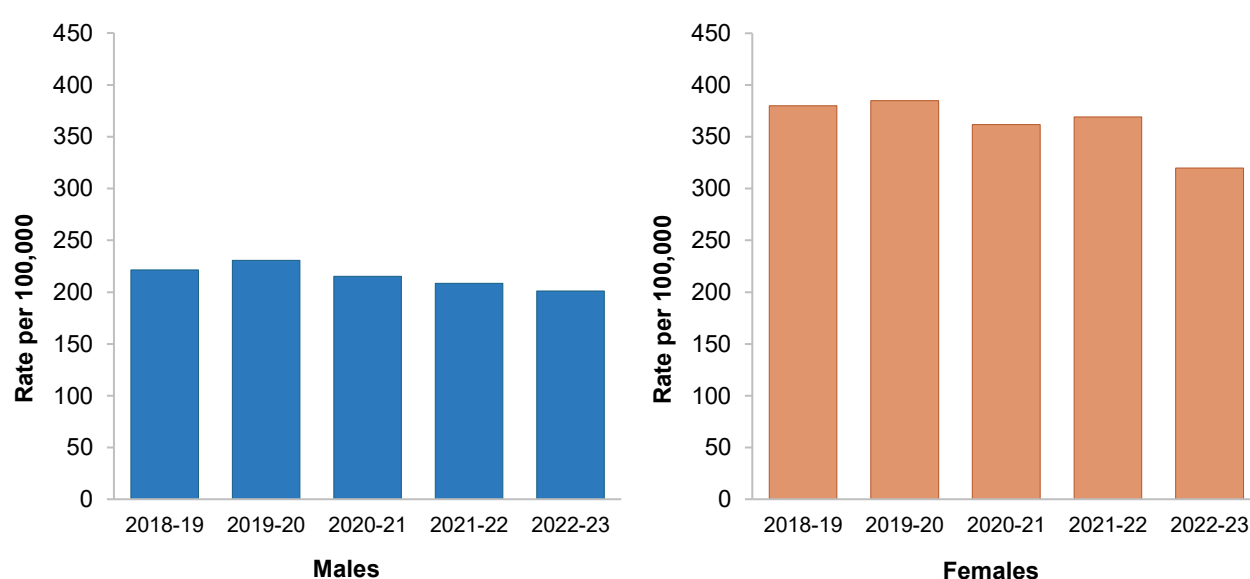
The social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is determined by a multitude of factors beyond the mental or physical health of the individual. Concepts of autonomy and empowerment, connection to family, culture and Country, as well as employment and educational opportunity all contribute to social and emotional wellbeing. These factors are explored using other targets and indicators throughout this report.

Declining rates of self-harm hospitalisations, with females still most affected

Data on hospitalisations for self-harm – Indicator 14a – is now available. In 2022-23, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females made up about two-thirds (61.2%) of hospital admissions for intentional self-harm. Nationally, rates of intentional self-harm hospitalisations declined among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2018-19 and 2022-23 (figure 2.11). The decline was greater among females (15.8%) than males (9.1%).¹⁸

Figure 2.11 – Non-fatal hospitalisations for intentional self-harm^a

Rate per 100,000 of intentional self-harm hospitalisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by sex (Indicator 14a)



a. Comparisons of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rates over time should be used with caution as increasing rates may reflect increasing identification within administrative data, rather than changes in underlying rates of intentional self-harm.

Source: Derived from AIHW (unpublished) National Hospital Morbidity Database. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE14a.1.

Psychological distress remains common

In 2022-23, around one in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (30.2%) experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress (Indicator 14d). The proportion has remained steady over

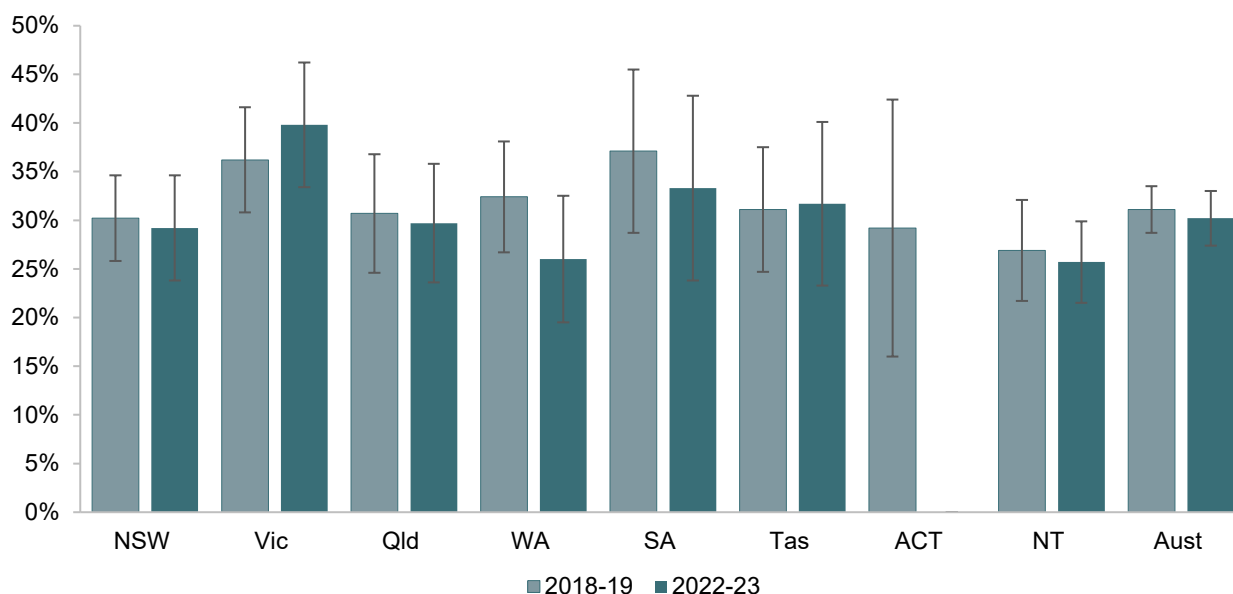
¹⁸ This report uses the terms 'male' and 'female' to refer to data disaggregated by sex. Data disaggregated by gender is not yet available for this indicator. For more information on gender and sex in the ADCR, refer to box 1.1.



time, highlighting how persistent and common these experiences are in communities across the country (figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12 – High levels of psychological distress^{a,b}

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years or over experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress in the four weeks prior to interview (Indicator 14d)



a. Based on the Kessler 5-measure, a short screening tool for psychological distress and a subset of the Kessler-10 scale. Scores range from 5 to 25, with high/very high psychological distress defined as a score of 12 or above. **b.** Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE14d.1.

While most people access health care, more are not seeing a doctor or counsellor when needed

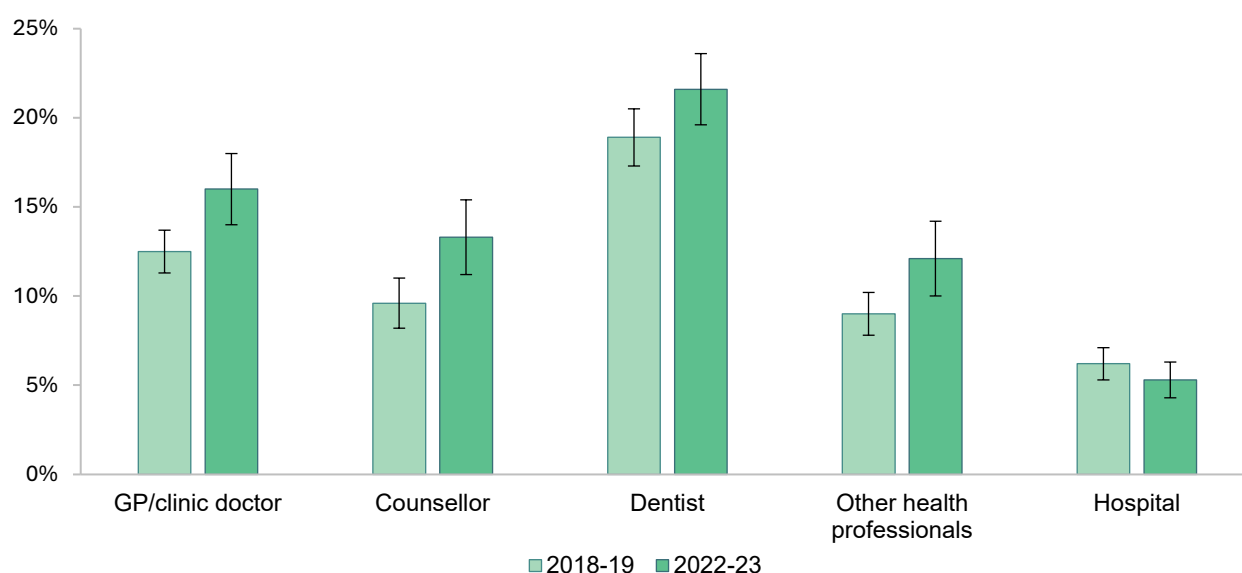
The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people either accessed health care when they needed it or did not need to seek health care at all. However, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people did not receive care in the 12 months prior to 2022-23 when they needed it (figure 2.13). This includes 16% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who did not go to the GP or clinic doctor, 12.1% who did not see another type of health professional and 5.3% who did not go to the hospital. In addition, 13.3% of adults (aged 18 years or over) did not see a counsellor and 21.6% of people aged two years or over did not go to the dentist. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who did not go to the doctor when needed, and adults who did not see a counsellor, had increased compared to 2018-19. However, there was no meaningful change in access to dentists, hospitals or other health professionals.

The reasons why people do not always access health care when they need varies. Common barriers include cost, concerns about cultural safety, time constraints and physical access issues, being too busy, and other reasons such as feeling that care will not help.



Figure 2.23 – Unmet health care needs by type of service^{a,b}

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who did not access health services when needed in the past 12 months (Indicator 14e)



a. GP/clinic doctor, other health professionals and hospital data are collected for all ages; dentist data for people aged two years and over; counsellor data for people aged 18 years and over. **b.** Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables SE14e.1–5.

The barriers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face when accessing health care can depend on the type of service. In 2022-23, the most common barrier to seeing a GP or clinic doctor was time and physical access issues, such as transport, distance, limited local services and long waits (9% of people), followed by ‘other reasons’ (5.7%). For seeing a counsellor, the pattern was reversed with ‘other reasons’ being most common (5.5% of adults), followed by time and physical access reasons (5.1% of adults). Cost was the main barrier to seeing a dentist or other health professionals, with 9.8% of people aged two years or over unable to afford a dental visit and 6% reporting affordability as the reason for not seeing other health professionals. For hospitals, ‘other reasons’ were the most commonly reported barrier, affecting 2.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Racism negatively affects the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, increasing the risk of anxiety, depression, self-harm and death by suicide (AIHW 2022b; Dudgeon et al. 2014; Kairuz et al. 2021; Kelly 2009; Truong and Moore 2023). The most recent data on experiences of racism (Indicator 14g) was published on the PC CtG dashboard in 2024 using 2022 data. The PC CtG dashboard still reports that 60% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years or over reported experiencing racial prejudice in the past six months, compared to 25% of the general community.¹⁹

¹⁹ There is no new data since the 2024 ADCR for this indicator. The PC CtG dashboard and page 26 of the 2024 ADCR include additional information.



Summary: Health, wellbeing and development

Progress towards targets is mixed.

While life expectancy is improving, there is not a significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. While there is an improvement in healthy birthweights, the latest assessment shows that a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have been assessed as developmentally on track.



Life expectancy is improving but not on track **(Target 1)**.

Mortality rates are increasing for most age cohorts (Indicator 1b).

Avoidable mortality is on the rise for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Indicator 1c).

Some personal risk factors that promote holistic health and wellbeing are improving (Indicator 1d).

The utilisation of health services has declined but is showing slow signs of recovery (Indicator 1e).



Healthy birthweights are improving but not on track **(Target 2)**.

Smoking rates during pregnancy fell (Indicator 2a).

Early prenatal care rates have risen (Indicator 2d).



Childhood development is worsening **(Target 4)**.

The proportion of children assessed as having highly developed strengths has declined (Indicator 4d).



Significant and sustained reduction in suicide is worsening **(Target 14)**.

There are declining rates of self-harm hospitalisations (Indicator 14a).

Psychological distress remains common (Indicator 14d).

While most people access health care, more are not seeing a doctor or counsellor when needed (Indicator 14e).

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people report experiencing racial prejudice (Indicator 14g).

Legend



On track



Improvement,
but not on track



Worsening



No change



No
assessment



2.2 Families and kin

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities feature kinship systems that influence all aspects of life. Kinship determines an individual's roles and responsibilities, behaviours and obligations to their family, community and Country. Kinship systems are essential for social and emotional wellbeing, particularly for children (Bourke et al. 2018; Miller et al. 2020). Further, nurturing family environments in childhood lay the foundation for competent and healthy adults who contribute to society and enjoy happy, fulfilling lives (Berger and Font 2015; Pezzullo et al. 2010). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are largely raised in loving and secure families (Lohoar et al. 2014; Martin 2017).

The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia's child protection system and the complex factors that contribute to family violence are interconnected and are also linked to the impacts of colonisation, dispossession and cultural dislocation (SNAICC 2017). The child protection system today reflects the same grief, trauma and harm associated with government legislation and policies of assimilation and can be detrimental for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child, family and community wellbeing (Menzies 2019). Fear that their children will be removed is a key reason why some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women do not report family violence (AIHW 2024d).

The child protection system is tied closely with entrances into juvenile justice and adult incarceration (ALRC 2017b; Healing Foundation 2013). The history of forced displacement, disenfranchisement and stealing of wages has also entrenched disadvantage in housing, employment and health outcomes. This contributes to the vulnerability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children today (SNAICC et al. 2023).

Cultural healing and the restoration of self-determination can assist both individuals and communities to strengthen protective factors and connect to culture, kin and Country (Salmon et al. 2019). This connection, in turn, can build resilience and mitigate further harm (Clark 2000; Walker and Shepherd 2008).



Box 2.7 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available in 2025 for socio-economic outcomes 12 and 13.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system	
• Child protection (Target 12)*#^	2024
• Out-of-home care (12b)*	2024
• Application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (12e)*	2024
• Cultural support plans (12g)**	2023
• Rates of substantiation by type of abuse (12m)*#	2023-24
Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe	
• Family safety (Target 13)	2018-19
• Women reporting family violence is common in their communities (13d)**	2021
• Hospitalisations for family violence (13h)*#	2022-23
• Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Assistance – family violence (13p)**#	2023-24
• SHS assistance – accompanied with children (13q)**	2023-24

Note: *Indicates where a new year of data has been published since the 2024 ADCR. **Indicates a new supporting indicator since the 2024 ADCR. #Indicates revised historical data due to updates in population estimates and projections. ^Revised target due to updates in population estimates and projections. Data considerations are provided in box 2.10.

Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system

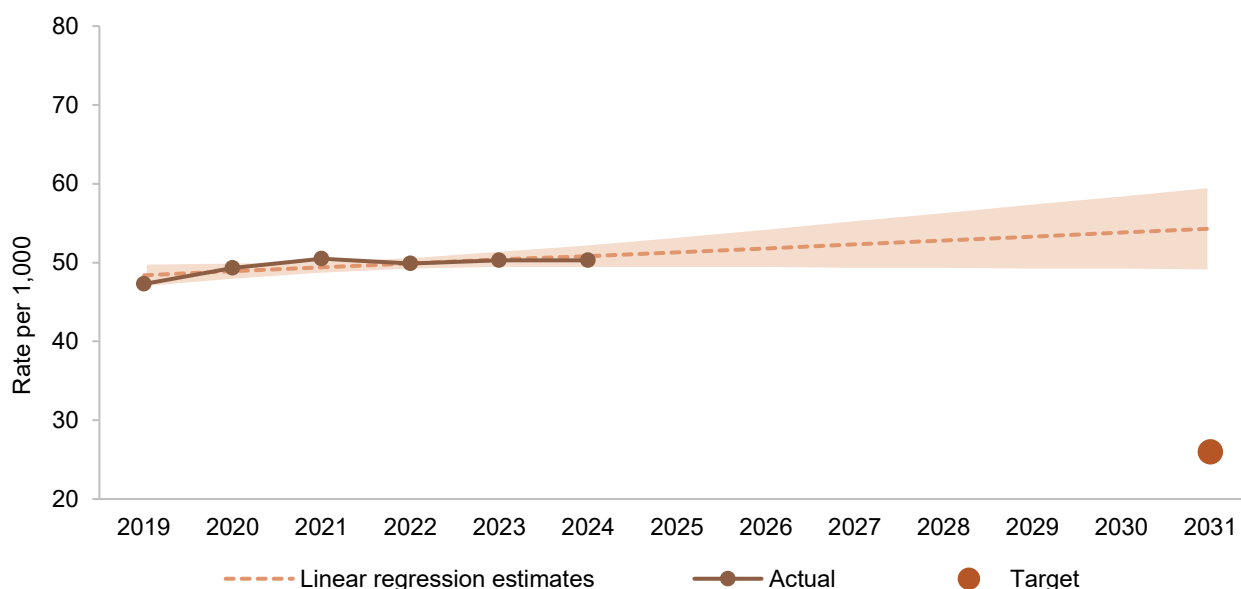
The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is increasing and the target is not on track to be met by 2031

The target of reducing the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031 is not on track to be met. In 2024, 19,985 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years were placed in out-of-home care – a rate of 50.3 per 1,000 children, up from 47.3 per 1,000 children in 2019 (figure 2.14). The increase means the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is worsening.



Figure 2.14 – Children in out-of-home care, nationally^{a,b}

Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care per 1,000 children, 2019 to 2031 (Target 12)



a. The shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals for the linear regression estimates. **b.** As the updated population has increased over the entire time series, assessments of changes over time are not substantially affected. There have been no changes to the national assessments of progress (on track/not on track) as a result of the updated populations. See section 1 'Data landscape' for more information on population changes.

Source: Derived from state and territory governments (unpublished); ABS Estimates and Projections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG12A.1.

Out-of-home care rates continue to increase for children under 18 years

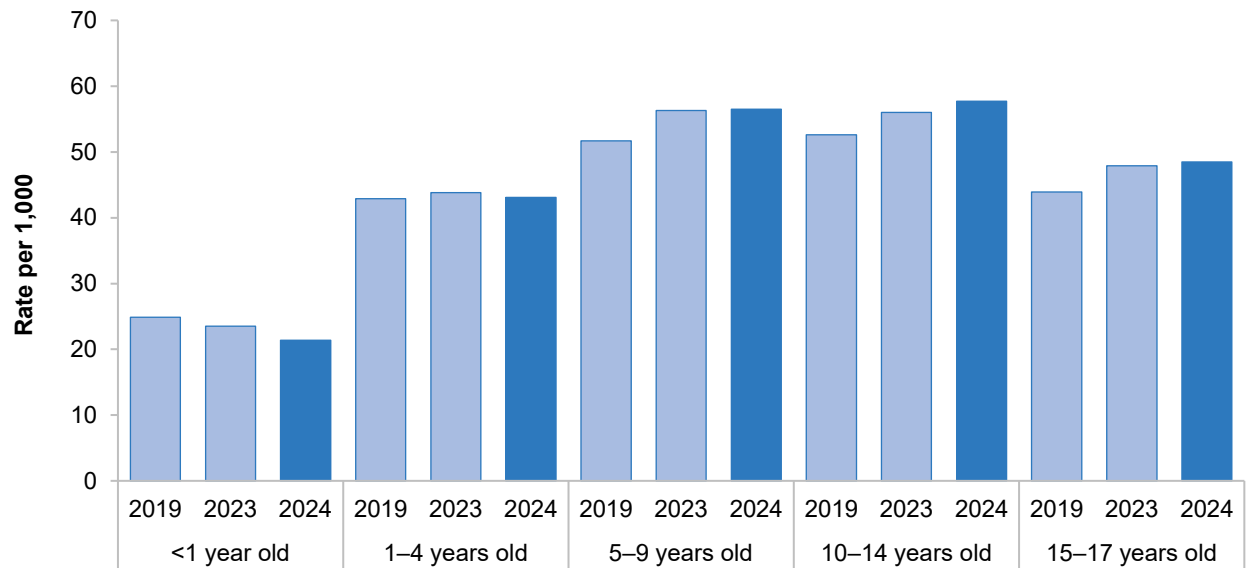
The rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care have increased for both young males and young females since the baseline year of 2019. The rates were 50.4 and 50.1 per 1,000 young males and young females, respectively, by 2024.

The rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care vary by age. Infants aged under 1 year saw a decline in out-of-home care rates between 2019 and 2024 and had the lowest rates in 2024 (figure 2.15). Over the same period, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 1–17 years had experienced rising rates of out-of-home care, especially children aged 10–14 years (figure 2.15). Children aged 5–9 years and 10–14 years have consistently experienced the highest rates since 2019 (the baseline year).



Figure 2.15 – Children in out-of-home care by age group

Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care per 1,000 children, comparing recent years to the baseline (2019) (Target 12)



Source: AIHW (unpublished) Child Protection Australia; ABS Estimates and Projections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG12A.3.

Disability status is unknown for a large proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care (30.4% in 2024). Overall, just over one in five (22.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care had a reported disability in 2024, up from 19.1% in 2021.

Many states see more children in out-of-home care, others see improvement

While there are currently no state and territory targets, the progress made in each state and territory does contribute to national outcomes. Similar to national trends, rates of out-of-home care increased from the 2019 (baseline year) to 2024 in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania, reflecting worsening outcomes. In contrast, out-of-home care rates decreased in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, indicating improvement. Western Australia showed no significant change.

State and territory assessment of progress (2019 to 2024)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
12	→	←	←	⊠	←	←	→	→
Confidence level	High	High	High	Low	High	Low	Low	High

Legend

→ Improvement

← Worsening

⊠ No change

•• No assessment



Note: These assessments of progress are provided with a 'High' or 'Low' level of confidence. An assessment reported with a High level of confidence is considered to be more reliable than one reported with a Low level of confidence. Please see the Glossary in this report or 'How to interpret the data' page on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.

A broader view of over-representation in the child protection system

Reducing the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is one part of the broader goal of socio-economic outcome 12, which is to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across the child protection system. Supporting indicators help shed light on the factors that may contribute to this over-representation, as well as provide context on how the system is supporting children and maintaining cultural connection.

Supporting indicators include the proportion of children in out-of-home care who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indicator 12b), as well as indicators monitoring the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP), which consists of guiding principles for decision-making within the child protection system (box 2.8). These indicators show the extent to which children are placed with relatives, kin or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, and how many are placed specifically with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relatives, kin or carers to support cultural connection (Indicator 12e). Other indicators include the proportion of children with cultural support plans (Indicator 12g), which are important for maintaining culture and connection to community while in care, and the rate of substantiated child protection notifications (Indicator 12m), which highlights earlier points of contact within the system.

Box 2.8 – The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

The ATSICPP, originating from a community-led movement three decades ago, consists of guiding principles for decision-making within the child protection system. The five interconnected elements recognise the importance of safe, family-based care to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and prevent actions like those that resulted in the Stolen Generations.

The ATSICPP's components are:

- prevention of entry into out-of-home care
- partnership with community in service design, delivery and individual case decisions
- participation of family members in decisions regarding the care and protection of children
- placement in out-of-home care in line with a placement hierarchy to ensure cultural connection (i.e. with family and kin first)
- connection to family, community, culture and Country for children in out-of-home care.

The full implementation of the ATSICPP still requires embedding all Priority Reforms in the design, implementation and evaluation of legislation, policy and practice within the child protection system, such as joint decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

Source: DSS (2015); SNAICC (2018) and SNAICC et al. (2023).



Over-representation in out-of-home care grows, despite fewer confirmed child protection notifications

The proportion of children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander increased from 40% in 2019 to 44.5% in 2024, highlighting a continued pattern of over-representation. This reflects both an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care and a decrease in the number of non-Indigenous children. While this may suggest more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were coming to the attention of the child protection system, the trend in substantiated child protection notifications tells a more complex story.

The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were the subject of a substantiated child protection notification increased between 2018-19 and 2020-21, but has since declined, falling below the baseline level by 2023-24. By 2023–2024, the rate of substantiated child protection notifications was 32.8 per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17. This downward trend suggests a reduction in confirmed cases of abuse or neglect. The rise in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care to 2024 may be influenced by earlier peaks in substantiations and the time it takes for placements to occur following a substantiation.

The decline in overall substantiated child protection notifications between 2018-19 and 2023-24 was seen across most types of reported abuse or neglect. This includes reductions or no meaningful change in reported physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Emotional abuse was the exception, with rates increasing over time. By 2023-24, emotional abuse continued to be the most common type of substantiated notification for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (16.8 per 1,000), followed by neglect (9.6 per 1,000).

Supporting indicators and data insights can provide deeper context for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes, however, it remains clear that the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the child protection system must be actively addressed (box 2.9).

Box 2.9 – Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021–2031

It is well-recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices, including kinship and community systems, play major roles in the creation of safe and nurturing environments for the holistic care of children and young people. Actions to combat the socio-economic disadvantage resulting from interpersonal and systemic racism, the persistent impacts of colonisation, and the Stolen Generations, can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to engage with services and supports that enable children to grow up safe, healthy and strong.

Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021–2031 (National Framework) has a vision to ensure that children and young people in Australia grow up safe, connected and supported in their family, community and culture, in an environment that enables them to reach their full potential. The National Framework details a 10-year strategy which aims to make significant and sustained progress in reducing the rate of child abuse and neglect, and its intergenerational impacts. The National Framework, and its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023–2026 (Action Plan), developed in partnership with SNAICC, directly support progress towards Target 12 of the Agreement.



Box 2.9 – Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021–2031

The Action Plan centres the experiences and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities with actions aligned with the Agreement’s Priority Reforms. It commits governments to:

- progressive systems transformation centred on self-determination, through implementing delegated authority for child protection decision-making
- investing in the community-controlled sector to fund early, targeted and culturally safe supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- building infrastructure for sovereignty of data and improving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evidence base
- developing a national sustainability approach for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family sector workforce
- actively implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
- improving the availability and quality of legal support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families interacting with child protection system
- strengthening advocacy through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioners
- addressing the social determinants of child safety and wellbeing across government portfolios, strengthening connections to social supports such as housing, education, employment and justice.

Source: DSS (2022a, 2022b) and Lohoar et al. (2014).

Three in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care continue to live with relatives, kin or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care living with relatives or kin, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers (the placement element of the ATSICPP) has remained steady over time. The proportion has held at 63.1%, or just over three in five children, since 2019 (the baseline year). Around two in five (40.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care were living with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relatives, kin or carers (the connection element of the ATSICPP), which is a decline since 2019 when it was 43.4%.

Over four in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care have a cultural care plan, where required

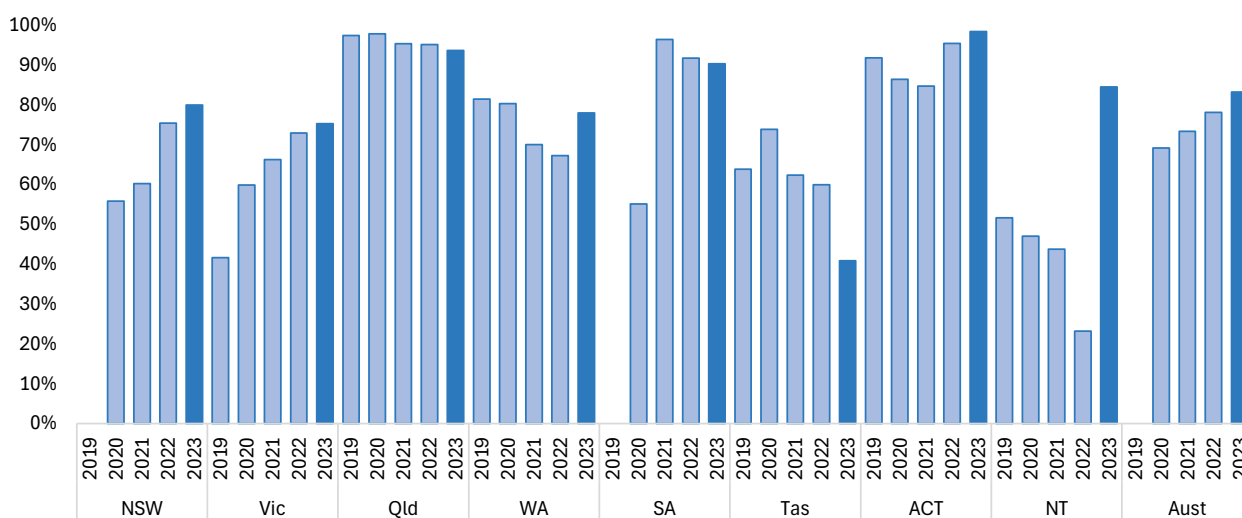
For the first time, data on cultural care plans for children in out-of-home care is available (Indicator 12g). This data is collected only in jurisdictions where legislation requires it. It shows that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care are receiving a cultural care plan. Nationally, the proportion was 83.3% in 2023, up from 69.2% in 2020.

The proportion of children in out-of-home care with cultural care plans, where required, shows varied patterns across states and territories (figure 2.16). It has increased steadily in New South Wales and Victoria and declined consistently in Queensland, however, Queensland remains among the highest nationally. In all other jurisdictions, proportions have fluctuated over time.



Figure 2.16 – Cultural care plans in place^{a,b}

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care who are required to have a cultural support plan and have one in place, 2019 to 2023 (Indicator 12g)



a. Data for 2019 is not available for New South Wales, South Australia and Australia. **b.** Data limitations in Tasmania prevent accurate reporting of this measure. Please refer to the indicator data specifications on the PC CtG dashboard.

Source: AIHW (unpublished) Child protection Australia. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE12g.1.

Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe

No data is available to track all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children

No new data is available since the baseline year (2018-19) on the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females or children who have experienced family violence. This is due to concerns with how the data was collected and the potential risk of harm this data collection caused for participants. There is a need for ethical, fit-for-purpose data but no such future data source has been identified (ABS 2022). While the lack of new data makes assessing progress difficult, evidence from research and multiple inquiries makes it clear that family violence is a significant issue in Australia, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

State and territory assessment of progress (2018-19 baseline)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
13	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●

Legend	→ Improvement	← Worsening	▢ No change	●● No assessment
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Building a fuller picture of family safety

There are four supporting indicators with data available in outcome area 13 that provide some insights into family safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households.²⁰

It is important for families to feel safe in their communities. Indicator 13d presents survey results that include responses to questions about family violence. Not all people who experience family violence report their injuries. However, the rates of hospitalisation provide insight into the extent of family violence assaults. Indicator 13h is an indicator reporting on hospitalisation for family violence assaults, the relationship between the people involved and whether they were children. People who experience family violence, including those with children, are at risk of homelessness. Indicator 13p provides contextual information about females seeking assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services because of family violence.²¹ Indicator 13q also provides contextual information about people seeking assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services because of family violence, who are accompanied by children aged under 15 years.

Survey of women's understanding of family violence in the community

New data for Indicator 13d from the National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey indicates that family violence is a problem in the communities of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women surveyed. Of the 248 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 16 years or over who participated in the survey, 170 agreed (68.5%) that violence against women was a problem in the suburb or town in which they live.

Hospitalisations for family violence are declining

Between 2018-19 and 2022-23, the rate of hospitalisations for family violence-related assaults fell 5.8% for males and 5.5% for females aged 15 years or over.²² The rate for children under 15 years also fell 10.9% in 2022-23 to 26.2 per 100,000 (figure 2.17). Care should be exercised when interpreting family violence data (box 2.10 outlines data considerations).

In 2022-23, 746.0 per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15 years or over were hospitalised for family violence related assaults.

In 2022-23, 223.5 per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 15 years or over were hospitalised for family violence related assaults.

²⁰ For more detailed information on available indicator data, please refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.

²¹ Differences in Specialist Homelessness Services Collection data over time and between jurisdictions may be influenced by state and territory policies, programs or systems. Comparisons of population rates should be used with caution. Increasing rates may reflect improving identification within homelessness service administrative data.

²² This report uses the terms 'male' and 'female' to refer to data disaggregated by sex. Data disaggregated by gender is not yet available for this indicator. For more information on gender and sex in the ADCR, refer to box 1.1.



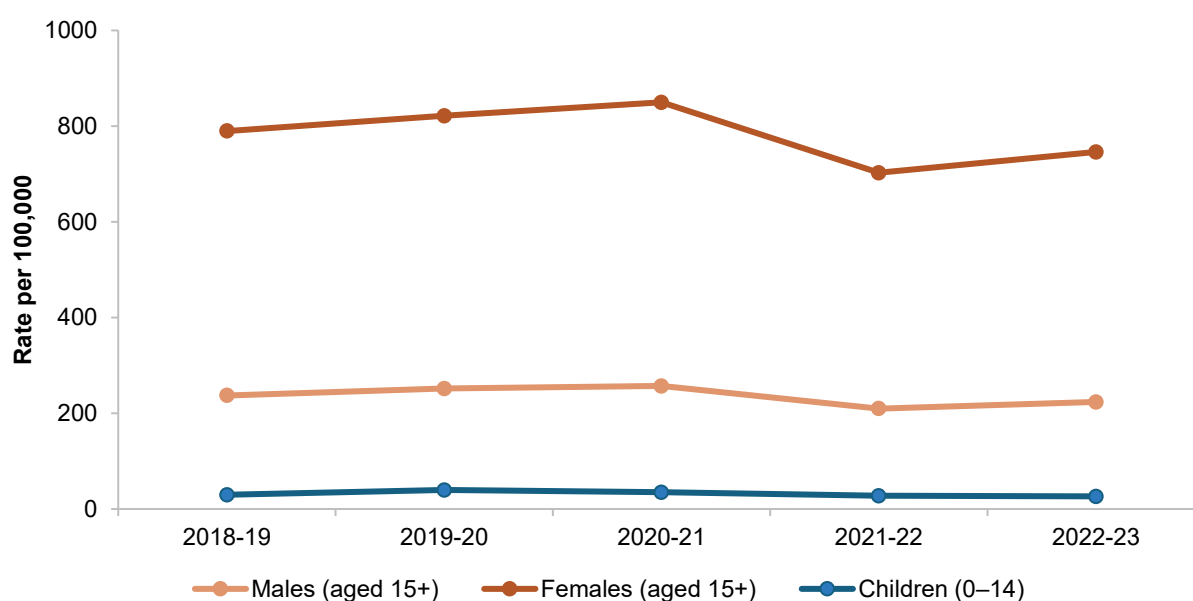
Box 2.10 – Data considerations: family violence may be underreported

Care should be taken in interpreting the data on hospitalisations for family violence. Not all people who sustain injuries or conditions from family violence may seek or receive treatment in a hospital or report that the injuries sustained are a result of family violence. It is estimated that more than 90% of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women goes unreported. Low and decreasing rates of family violence are desirable. However, an increase in the rate may indicate that more people who sustain injuries or conditions from family violence have felt safe to receive medical treatment and to report the perpetrator.

Source: PC (2024).

Figure 2.17 – National hospitalisation rates for family violence

Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, males and children hospitalised for family violence per 100,000 people, 2018-19 to 2022-23 (Indicator 13h)



Source: Derived from AIHW (unpublished) National Hospital Morbidity Database; ABS Estimates and Projections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables SE13h.1 and SE13h.3.

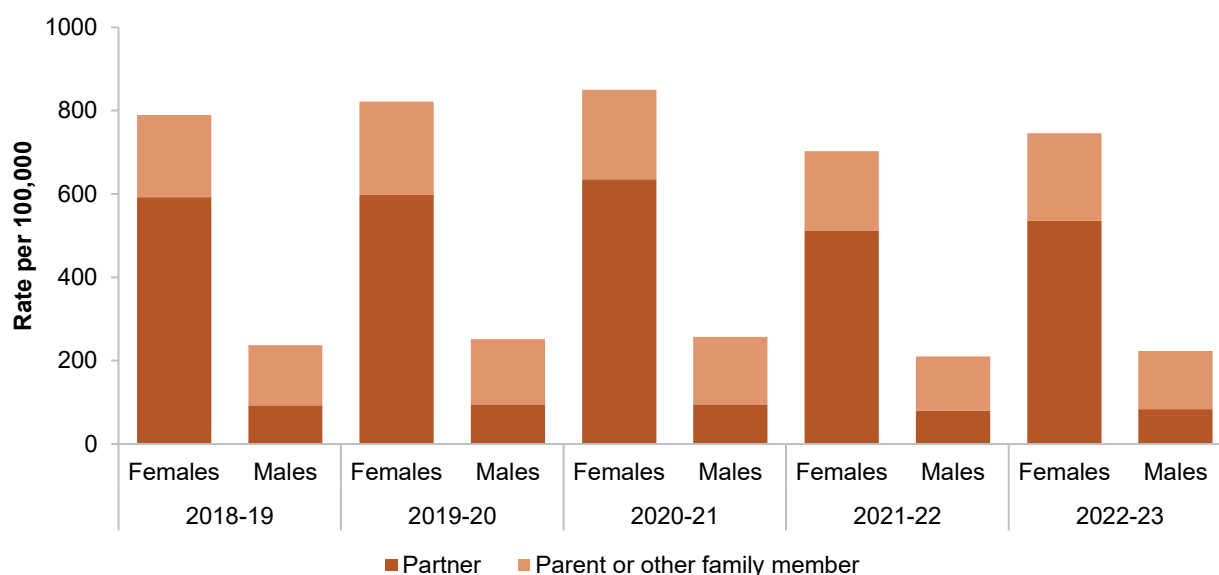
In 2022-23, 71.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females hospitalised for family violence reported the perpetrator was an intimate partner (535.3 per 100,000 out of a total of 746.0 per 100,000) and 28.2% reported the perpetrator was a parent or family member (210.7 per 100,000) (figure 2.18). For males hospitalised due to family violence, parents or other family members were more often reported as the perpetrators than intimate partners.²³ In 2022-23, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children hospitalised for family violence was small and not disaggregated by the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator.

²³ This report uses the terms 'male' and 'female' to refer to data disaggregated by sex. Data disaggregated by gender is not yet available for this indicator. For more information on gender and sex in the ADCR, refer to box 1.1.



Figure 2.18 – Family violence hospitalisations by relationship

Rate of hospitalisation for family violence related assaults per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over by relationship of the perpetrator to the victim by sex, 2018-19 to 2022-23 (Indicator 13h)



Source: Derived from AIHW (unpublished) National Hospital Morbidity Database; ABS Estimates and Projections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE13h.2.

More females than males seek assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services because of family violence





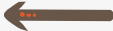


In 2023-24, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females experiencing family and domestic violence were 7.1 times more likely to seek assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS). In 2023-24, 512.9 per 100,000 females and 72.5 per 100,000 males aged 15 years or over sought SHS assistance and had experienced family and domestic violence.²⁴

The rate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experienced family and domestic violence and are seeking assistance from SHS has increased since the baseline year. In 2018-19, 467.4 per 100,000 females and 69.4 per 100,000 males aged 15 years or over sought SHS assistance and had experienced family and domestic violence.

A greater proportion of males seeking SHS assistance attended with children than females. In 2023-24, 68.0% of males seeking SHS assistance attended with children compared to 40.0% of females. In 2023-24, 305.8 per 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged under 15 years sought SHS assistance and experienced family and domestic violence. The rate has fluctuated since the baseline year (2018-19).

²⁴ This report uses the terms 'male' and 'female' to refer to data disaggregated by sex. Data disaggregated by gender is not yet available for this indicator. For more information on gender and sex in the ADCR, refer to box 1.1.



Summary: Families and kin					
Children continue to be overrepresented in the child protection system and data is not available to assess progress for family safety.					
		Over-representation of children in the child protection system is worsening (Target 12).		<p>Over-representation in out-of-home care is growing, despite fewer confirmed child protection notifications (Indicators 12b and 12m).</p> <p>Three in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care continue to live with relatives, kin or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers (Indicator 12e).</p> <p>Over four in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care have a cultural care plan, where required (Indicator 12g).</p>	
		No assessment of progress for family safety (Target 13).		<p>Hospitalisations for family violence are declining (Indicator 13h).</p> <p>More females than males seek assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services because of family violence (Indicator 13q).</p>	
Legend	 On track	 Improvement, but not on track	 Worsening	 No change	 No assessment



2.3 Culture and language

Language shapes our understanding of, connection to, and place within the world (Tudor-Smith et al. 2024). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, language plays a central role in cultural identity and conceptions of Country, facilitating intergenerational transmission of complex, local and valuable cultural practices, traditions and knowledges (AIATSIS 2023; First Languages Australia 2024; IDILDG and Australian Government 2023). For tens of thousands of years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages flourished, with over 250 languages comprising more than 800 dialects spoken pre-colonisation (AIATSIS 2023).

Cultural practice and language were disrupted by colonisation (AHRC 2011; Commonwealth of Australia 2020; Tudor-Smith et al. 2024). Maintenance and revival of language is vital to the physical, social, emotional, cultural, spiritual, ecological and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities (Commonwealth of Australia 2020; Dudgeon et al. 2014; Marmion et al. 2014; Salmon et al. 2019; Sivak et al. 2019). The rights to revitalise, use, develop and transmit traditional languages, oral traditions, writing systems and literatures to future generations are enshrined internationally (UN 2007).

Language maintenance and revitalisation activities led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that exercise their rights to use and practice language and culture in various ways are underway across Australia (Simpson et al. 2019; Sivak et al. 2019). These include preserving linguistic knowledge, providing accessible media in language through community-controlled organisations, delivering services in language, teaching language and cultural knowledge, and partnering with governments to establish language institutions (Commonwealth of Australia 2020; FNMA 2024; IDILDG and Australian Government 2023; NSW Government 2019; Reed et al. 2024; Simpson et al. 2019).

Strategies have also emerged to advance language maintenance and revitalisation such as truth-telling, centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, intergenerational knowledge transfers, bilingual education and caring for Country programs (IDILDG and Australian Government 2023). There are also upward trends being seen in the number of activities accessed at Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres across Australia. Further opportunities to lay long-term foundations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages to flourish include formal agreements, protocols and legislation (Janke et al. 2023).



Box 2.11 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available in 2025 for socio-economic outcome 16.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 16: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing	
• Languages (Target 16)	2018-19
• Number and age profile of language speakers (16c)	2021
• Speak language (16d)**	2022-23
• Accessing Commonwealth funded language centres (16e)*	2022-23

Note: *Indicates where a new year of data has been published since the 2024 ADCR. **Indicates a new supporting indicator since the 2024 ADCR.

Outcome 16: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing

There is no new data available to report on the progress for a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages

There is insufficient data available to report progress for this target since the baseline data (2018-19) was established.²⁵ Collecting data on languages is challenging. Differing methodologies across National Indigenous Language Surveys (NILS), complexities in defining and measuring language proficiency and vitality, and potential undercounting or lack of data for certain language varieties are impacting data collection efforts.

State and territory assessment of progress (2018-19 baseline year)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
16	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••

Legend

→

Improvement

←

Worsening

▤

No change

••

No assessment

²⁵ Page 74 of the 2023 ADCR includes the latest national result or refer to the PC CtG dashboard for revised outcomes.



More context on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages

In the absence of target data, supporting indicator data can help to interpret progress towards an outcome. The supporting indicators for outcome 16 provide insights into the strength and growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. There are three supporting indicators with data available on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.²⁶

Indicator 16c provides information on the number and age profile of the speakers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Indicator 16c has two measures. One measure is the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken, by estimated number of speakers, by age group. The number of speakers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages can provide insight into the strength and use of those languages. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are likely to be stronger, more supported and flourishing where speakers of language exist across all age groups. Younger age groups speaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages can indicate that languages are being taught to new generations, encouraging the use of that language into the future. The other measure is the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who used an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at home, by age group. Increasing use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in the home can indicate increasing levels of language proficiency and practice.

Indicator 16d is a new supporting indicator that provides information on the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indicator 16d has three measures. One measure is the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who use an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at home. Another measure is the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who speak Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander words or languages. There is also a measure of the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are learning Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander words or languages. These measures indicate the degree of language use among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Indicator 16e is a contextual indicator that is used to explore how well-supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are. A new year of data has been published for this indicator since the 2024 ADCR. Indicator 16e has two measures. One measure is the number of times people accessed an activity at Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres. This measure can indicate people are using Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres to build and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. The other measure is the number of Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres by governance structure, either Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled centres or non-Indigenous controlled centres. This measure may be used to explore progress with reference to community-control and the accessibility of Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres.

Around half Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language varieties have speakers under 20 years of age

In 2018-19 there were a total of 141 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language varieties in the National Indigenous Languages Survey (Indicator 16c). The majority of languages reported (118 of the total 141) have fewer than 500 speakers in each age group (people aged 0–19 years, 20–39 years, 40–59 years and 60 years and over), with 17 having zero speakers. 60 languages have zero speakers

²⁶ For more detailed information on available supporting indicator data, please refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.



aged between 0–19 years.²⁷ Nationally, 75.9% of people who used an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language at home were aged under 44 years.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language use at home remained stable

The proportion of people who used an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at home remained stable between 2016 (10.3%) and 2021 (10.0%) (Indicator 16d).²⁸ In 2022-23, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who reported speaking an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language was 13.2%, with a further 22.4% able to speak some words. Of those surveyed, 16.0% of people reported learning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language.²⁹

Activity at Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres has tripled

The total number of Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres has increased nationally from 18 in 2019 to 23 in 2024 (Indicator 16e). There has also been an upward trend in the number of activities accessed at Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres across Australia, with total accesses increasing from 19,723 in 2018-19 to 64,067 in 2023-24.

New South Wales has shown the most notable increase in activities accessed from 2018-19 to 2023-24, increasing from 7,689 to 33,503 accesses. In 2023-24, data for Queensland no longer includes online learning activities, with a total of 10,934 activities accessed. In 2022-23, Queensland reported 42,399 accesses (up from 4,417 in 2018-19), including online learning activities. Western Australia reported a total of 14,116 activities accessed.

²⁷ This is a new indicator since the 2024 ADCR. Data for the proportion of language users at home under Indicator 16c is sourced from the AIATSIS National Indigenous Languages Survey 2020. 2018-19 is the most recent reporting period for this indicator. Prior to 2020, the last release of the National Indigenous Languages Survey was 2014 and is not covered in this report.

²⁸ Data for the proportion of language users at home under Indicator 16d is sourced from the ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021. The next census will take place in 2026.

²⁹ Data for language learning and proficiency is sourced from the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2022-23. This report does not cover data from previous years of the survey.



Summary: Culture and language

There is still no new data available to report progress towards a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.



There is no new data for the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages since the baseline year **(Target 16)**.

Around half Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language varieties have speakers under 20 years of age (Indicator 16c).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language use at home remained stable (Indicator 16d).

Activity at Commonwealth funded Indigenous Language Centres has tripled (Indicator 16e).

Legend



On track



Improvement,
but not on track



Worsening



No change



No
assessment



2.4 Education and training

For thousands of years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have sustained and developed intricate systems of learning and education, deeply rooted in cultural wisdom and oral tradition, and refined through experience and observation across generations (Burridge and Chodkiewicz 2012). Government policies of assimilation sought to replace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges with a Eurocentric model of education and values (Morrison et al. 2019). As a result, the epistemological foundations, or ways of knowing, in the Australian education system value Western knowledges above Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges (Bodkin-Andrews and Carlson 2016).

Culturally responsive schooling supports academic attainment through enacting cultural competency and tailoring education to a student's cultural frame of reference, including knowledges, values and skills (Perso and Hayward 2020). It involves a fundamental shift in the educational system towards understanding the links between education, power and cultural hierarchies (Bishop and Vass 2021).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children engaged in early childhood education and care can experience benefits such as improved school readiness and cognitive development (Biddle and Bath 2013; Sims 2011). Beyond enrolment, ensuring access to holistic, culturally safe and responsive early childhood education is essential for supporting the development and identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, helping them to be strong members of their families and communities (SNAICC 2022, 2024; SNAICC et al. 2023).

Primary and secondary school education that recognises the strengths and potential of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is vital. This includes a focus on high expectations, strong teacher-student relationships where teachers connect with students' life-worlds, socio-political awareness and place value in diversity as an asset (Morrison et al. 2019).

Engagement in education and training is intertwined with many social and economic factors that support young people to thrive (PC 2020). In particular, higher education can play a crucial role for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, supporting improved health and wellbeing, increased access to housing as well as future employment and earning opportunities (AIHW 2022a; DoE 2012; Venn and Biddle 2018).



Box 2.12 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available for socio-economic outcomes 3, 5, 6 and 7.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years	
• Early childhood education (Target 3)*#	2024
• Attendance in early childhood education (3a)**	2024
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care service providers (3b)*	2024
Outcome 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential	
• Attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualification (Target 5)	2021
• School attendance (5a)**	2024
• NAPLAN levels (5c)*	2024
Outcome 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways	
• Completion of a tertiary qualification (Target 6)	2021
• Higher education commencement, attrition and completion rates (6a)*	2023
• Higher education applications, offers and acceptance rates (6b)**	2021
• Certificate III and above VET commencements, attrition and completion rates (6c)*	2023
• VET graduate outcomes and satisfaction levels (6g)**	2024
Outcome 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education	
• Youth fully engaged in employment, education or training (Target 7)	2021
• Proportion of youth not engaged in employment, education or training (7a).	2021

Note: *Indicates where a new year of data has been published since the 2024 ADCR. **Indicates a new supporting indicator since the 2024 ADCR. #Indicates revised historical data due to updates in population estimates and projections. Data considerations are provided in box 2.15.



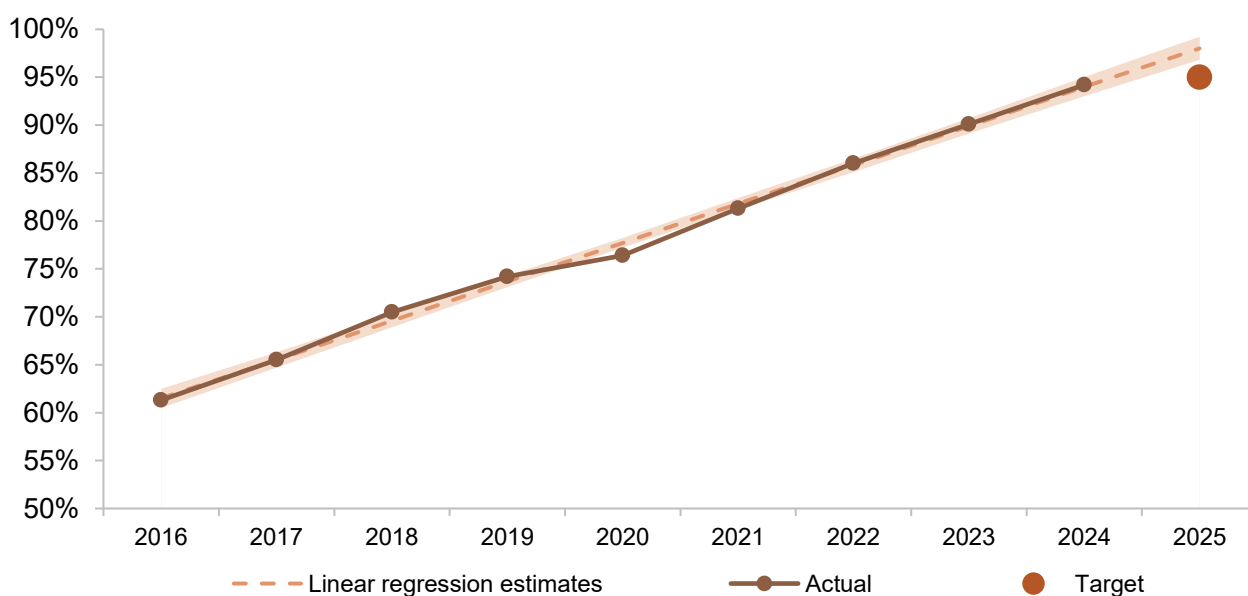
Outcome 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Full-time Schooling early childhood education is increasing and the target is on track to be met by 2025

Nationally, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Year Before Full-time Schooling (YBFS) age cohort enrolled in early childhood education is increasing and on track to meet the target of 95% by 2025.³⁰ In 2024, 94.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the YBFS age cohort were enrolled in early childhood education. This is an increase of 32.9 percentage points since the baseline year (2016), when 61.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were enrolled in a preschool program (figure 2.19).

Figure 2.19 – Early childhood education enrolment rate^{a,b}

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the state-specific YBFS age cohort who are enrolled in a preschool program nationally, 2016–2024 (Target 3)



a. The shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals for the linear regression estimates. **b.** Due to population estimate revisions, the data and target for early childhood education enrolment have changed since the 2024 ADCR. As the updated population has increased over the entire time series, assessments of changes over time are not substantially affected. There have been no changes to the national assessments of progress (on track/not on track) as a result of the updated populations. See Section 1.4 for more information on population changes.

Source: Derived from ABS (unpublished) Preschool Education Australia. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table CtG3A.1.

³⁰ Enrolment rates are calculated using the numerator and denominator from different data sources and they are based on different assumptions. The numerator is administrative data for preschool enrolment reported annually. The denominator, the potential population of children aged in the state-specific YBFS cohort, is based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projections.



Outcomes among diverse populations have improved

Disaggregated data is available for Target 3 that enables analysis of outcomes among diverse populations.³¹ Between 2016 and 2024, the proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in early childhood education increased for male and female children, children in regional and remote areas, children living in the most disadvantaged communities and children with disability.

Increases in the proportion of female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in preschool have been greater than the increases for male children. The 95% national target has already been reached for female child enrolments. Nationally, 95.0% of female children were enrolled in early childhood education in 2024, which is an increase of 34.6 percentage points since 2016. The proportion of male children enrolled increased 31.3 percentage points since 2016, to 93.4%.

Early childhood education enrolments have increased significantly more in major cities and regional areas than in remote communities. From 2016 to 2024, the enrolment rate in a preschool program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in major cities had increased by 38.9 per 100 children aged four years in the community to 96.0 per 100 children. This is more than the increase of 35.1 per 100 children in inner and outer regional areas and significantly larger than the increase of 2.4 per 100 children in remote and very remote areas over the same period.

There is no data available to report on the national proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with disability enrolled in preschool programs, but jurisdictional data is available. Enrolment rates of children with disability have increased in all states and territories except Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. The Northern Territory has seen the largest increase (16.9 percentage points from 2019 to 2024), while there have been decreases of 0.7 percentage points in Tasmania from 2018 to 2024 and in the Australian Capital Territory from 2016 to 2024.









Preschool enrolments have improved across almost all jurisdictions

While there are currently no state and territory targets, the progress made in each state and territory does contribute to the national outcomes. The proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in state-specific YBFS have increased across every jurisdiction from 2016 to 2024, except the Northern Territory.

³¹ For more detailed information on available target disaggregation data, please refer to table A3 in the Appendix or to the PC CtG dashboard.



State and territory assessment of progress (2016 to 2024)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
3								
Confidence level	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	Low

Legend	 Improvement	 Worsening	 No change	 No assessment
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Note: These assessments of progress are provided with a 'High' or 'Low' level of confidence. An assessment reported with a High level of confidence is considered to be more reliable than one reported with a Low level of confidence. Please see the Glossary in this report or 'How to interpret the data' page on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.

Building a fuller picture of early childhood education

Two supporting indicators help provide a fuller picture of progress on early childhood education enrolment rates by offering context around service access, availability and governance. Indicator 3a relates to the amount of time children who were enrolled in a preschool program attended in the reference week, helping to interpret the intensity of participation. Indicator 3b reports on the number and governance arrangements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused integrated early years' service providers, delivering insights into the extent of community control in the early childhood education sector.³²

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children spent more hours in preschool

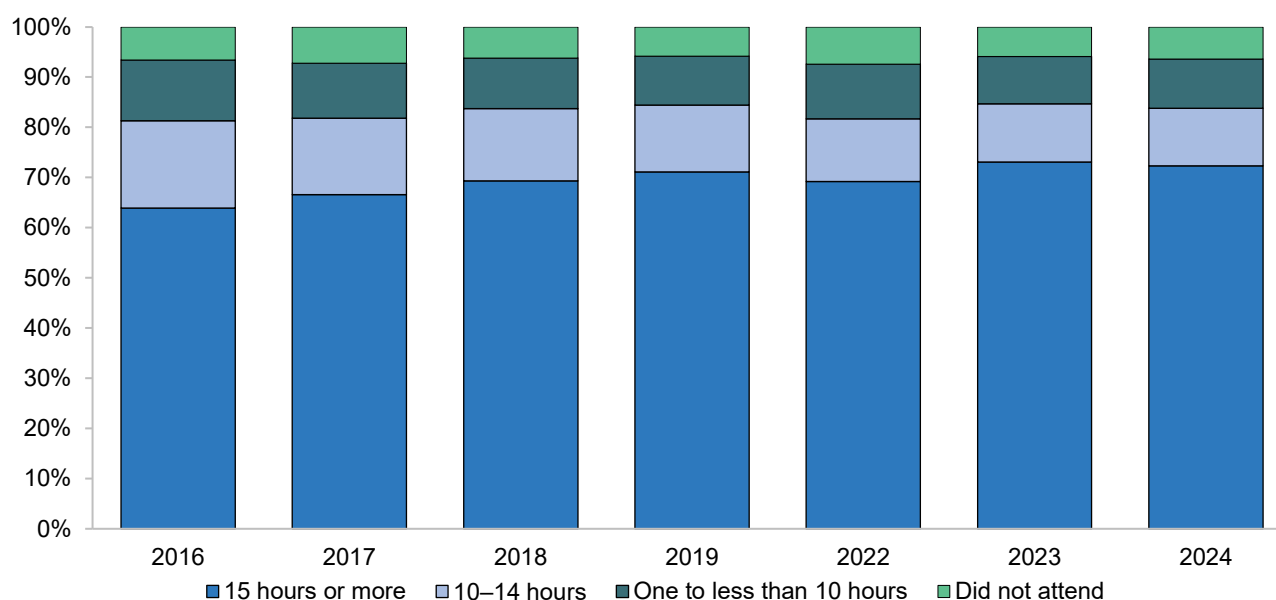
The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program who attended for 15 hours or more has increased since 2016. Nationally in 2024, 72.3% of children in the state-specific YBFS age cohort enrolled in a preschool program, attended preschool for 15 hours or more in the reference week – an increase of 8.3 percentage points since 2016. Over the same period, the proportions of children who attended 10 to 14 hours and one to less than 10 hours decreased by 5.9 percentage points and 2.3 percentage points, respectively. The proportion who did not attend any preschool during the reference week decreased by 0.2 percentage points (figure 2.20).

³² For more detailed information on available supporting indicator data, refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.



Figure 2.20 – Preschool attendance, by hours of attendance^{a,b}

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in state-specific YBFS age cohort enrolled in a preschool program nationally, 2016–2024 (Indicator 3a)



a. Data is not available for NSW in 2021 and Victoria in 2020 and 2021, and therefore nationally for 2020 and 2021.

b. Data is not fully comparable over time or across jurisdictions due to differences and changes in coverage and methodologies. Care should be taken when interpreting data as attendance may be impacted by illness, Sorry Business, cultural activities, holiday leave or ongoing impacts of COVID-19 in some states and territories.

Source: ABS Preschool Education. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE3a.1.

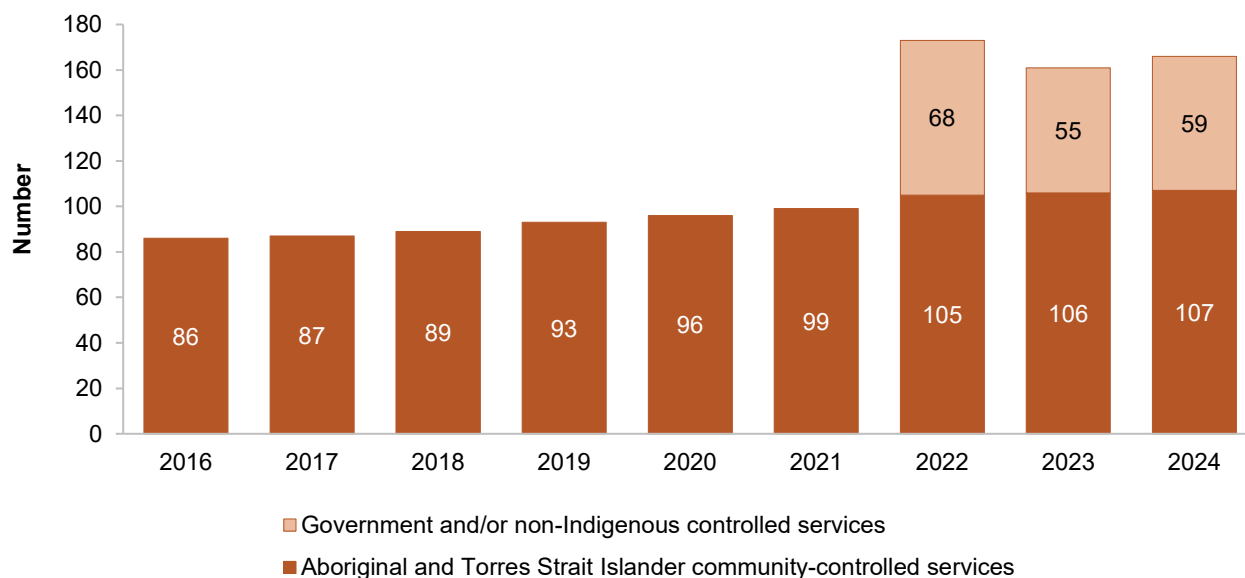
The number of community-controlled early years services has continued to grow

Nationally, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused integrated early years services that are controlled by community has increased year-on-year since 2016. In 2024, there were 110 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled early years services, which constituted 65.1% of the 169 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused integrated early years services. This was a 27.9% increase since 2016. Between 2022 and 2024, the total number of integrated early years services fell by 2.3% due to a decline in the number of government and/or non-Indigenous controlled services (figure 2.21).



Figure 2.21 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care service providers^a

Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused integrated early years services nationally, by governance structure, 2016–2024 (Indicator 3b)



a. The data for government and/or non-Indigenous controlled services is not available prior to 2022.

Source: SNAICC (unpublished) Register of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused integrated early years services. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE3b.1.

In 2024, 100% of integrated early years services were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. Other jurisdictions where the majority of services were community-controlled include New South Wales (87.5%), Queensland (67.5%), Western Australia and Tasmania (66.7% each). Supporting community-controlled organisations to design and deliver integrated early childhood education and care encourages culturally inclusive learning environments in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people flourish (box 2.13).



Box 2.13 – Embedding culture and community in early childhood education

Outcome 3 recognises the benefits of promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connection to family, culture and identity in early childhood education. Opportunities to increase access, availability and affordability of high quality, culturally responsive education include:

- embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identity into all education services through connecting with community, Elders and nature, sharing knowledges, incorporating traditional child-rearing methods and preserving language skills
- prioritising investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and support for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, to use their knowledges and expertise to deliver nurturing, culturally safe environments and education services.

The Australian Government Department of Education signed Formal Partnership Agreements with SNAICC and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) in March 2025. These agreements recognise the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures and the necessity of partnership to reform and enrich education systems for children and their families. The agreements aim to:

- affirm the valued position of SNAICC and NATSIEC as national peak bodies advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and community-controlled organisations on matters relating to early childhood and education.
- encourage co-design and co-development of policy and programs, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, expertise and lived experiences influence government decisions on education.
- ensure accountability and commitment to the Priority Reforms and early childhood and education outcomes specified under the Agreement.

While the agreements commit parties to shared decision-making informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and community-controlled organisations, the agreement does not explicitly commit to investment in the community-controlled sector.

Source: NATSIEC and DoE (2025); PC (2022c); SNAICC (2025); SNAICC et al. (2023); SNAICC and Mason-White (2012); VACCA (2023) and VAEAI (2020).

Outcome 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential

In 2021, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attaining Year 12 or equivalent had increased, but the target was not on track to be met by 2031³³

The target for socio-economic outcome area five is that by 2031 the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification will increase

³³ The latest progress of assessment for Target 5 occurred in 2023 using 2021 data. The data for Target 5 is updated every five years and is sourced from the ABS Census of Population and Housing. The next census will take place in 2026.



to 96%. Nationally, 68.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years had attained Year 12 or equivalent qualification in 2021.³⁴

All jurisdictions have seen some level of improvement in senior secondary attainment

While there are currently no state and territory targets, the progress made in each state and territory contributes to the national outcome. The assessment shown below reflects an improvement (positive progress) in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification, in every state and territory from 2016 to 2021.

State and territory assessment of progress (2016 to 2021)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
5	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→

Legend	→ Improvement	← Worsening	▢ No change	•• No assessment
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Note: The assessments should be used with caution as they are based on a limited number of data points.

Building a fuller picture of learning potential

There are two supporting indicators that provide further information on the participation and performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students and build a clearer picture of progress towards students achieving their full learning potential. The first is the new Indicator 5a, which contributes to an understanding of participation in schooling by reporting on student attendance rates. The second, Indicator 5c, records the results of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assessments, helping to identify student proficiency in core areas of reading, writing and numeracy.³⁵

School attendance rates have been decreasing

Students who consistently attend school are more likely to successfully develop core skills and less likely to leave the education system early (Purdie and Buckley 2010). Inclusive and flexible schooling practices can ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have support to access educational pathways and do not experience significant disruptions from school non-attendance.

New data shows that school attendance rates have decreased significantly from the baseline year (2016) for all Year levels, at the national level and across all jurisdictions. Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in Years 1–6 had an average attendance rate of 80.9% in 2024,

³⁴ More reporting and analysis (including additional information and figures) for this target can be found on the PC CtG dashboard and page 52 of the 2023 ADCR.

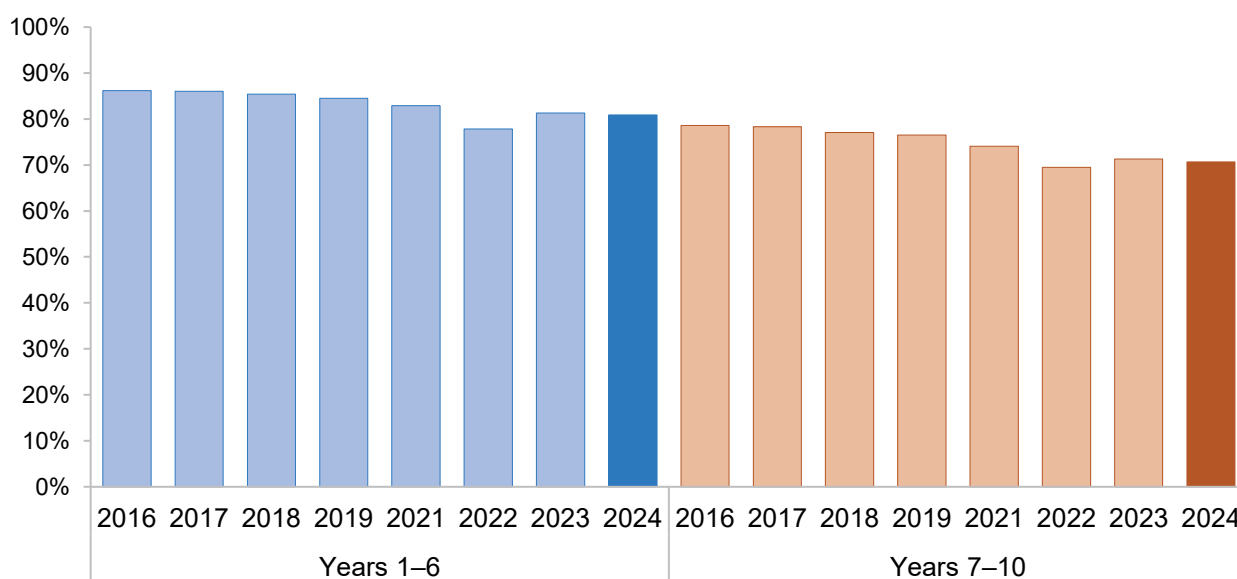
³⁵ For more detailed information on available supporting indicator data, refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.



which had decreased by 5.3 percentage points since 2016. The average attendance rate for students in Years 7–10 has declined by 7.9 percentage points to 70.7% over the same period (figure 2.22).

Figure 2.22 – National school attendance rate, by Year level^{a,b}

Average school attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 1–6 and Years 7–10, 2016–2024 (Indicator 5a)



a. Attendance rates are calculated as the proportion of full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in semester one of the year. **b.** School attendance data for 2020 has not been published due to inconsistencies resulting from the varying health advice and schooling arrangements across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), National Student Attendance Data Collection. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE5a.1.

Generally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in lower Year levels attend school more often and their attendance rates are decreasing slower than those in higher Year levels. From 2016 to 2024, Year 7 students' attendance rates declined 5.9 percentage points to 77.4% while Year 10 students' rates decreased 9.3 percentage points to 65.5%.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in non-government schools have attendance rates that remain higher and are decreasing less than those of students in government schools. Since the baseline year (2016), average student attendance across Years 1–6 decreased 5.7 percentage points at government schools and 2.9 percentage points at non-government schools, with rates reaching 80.2% and 85.0% respectively in 2024. For students in Years 7–10, the average attendance rates have fallen by 9.6 percentage points to 68.1% at government schools and 2.2 percentage points to 80.1% at non-government schools over the same period. Implementing strategies to support regular school attendance and engagement will assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve their full learning potential (box 2.14).



Box 2.14 – Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school engagement through culturally inclusive schooling practices

Culturally inclusive schooling practices can support school attendance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Factors that can support schooling experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and encourage increased attendance include:

- building inclusive understandings of cultural knowledges, connections to Country and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and culture
- incorporating practices of self-determination and power-sharing which enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to define their aspirations of success in schooling
- valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities and practicing inclusion to enable healthy identity formation and positive self-esteem, and facilitate agency and engagement in Community
- encouraging socio-political consciousness to foster learning relationships based on interactive collaboration and co-inquiry
- developing relationships within schools to uncover the strengths and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students which contribute to high expectation learning environments.

The incorporation of culturally inclusive schooling practices throughout education in Australia is currently underway. For example, the Culturally Nourishing Schooling Project aims to foster ongoing relationships between schools and their local communities, and Arrernte-kenhe Angkentye is a curriculum framework driven by the principles of Apmerengentyele, meaning ‘from the land’.

Source: Lowe et al. (2025) and Turner and Children’s Ground (2023).

Some NAPLAN results have improved

New NAPLAN data shows the proportion of students assessed as having ‘developing’, ‘strong’ or ‘exceeding’ proficiency increased across all Year levels in writing and most Year levels in numeracy but decreased across all Year levels in reading.

Box 2.15 – Data considerations: NAPLAN proficiency levels

NAPLAN is an annual nationwide assessment of core literacy and numeracy skills for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. A new system for reporting students’ NAPLAN results against four proficiency levels was introduced in 2023. New data for the 2024 NAPLAN enables reporting on how student results are changing over time.

The four proficiency levels are ‘exceeding’, ‘strong’, ‘developing’ and ‘needs additional support’. The ‘needs additional support’ proficiency level is intended to identify students who are at risk of not progressing satisfactorily at school. While students with results in other levels may also need support in particular areas, those assessed as in the ‘developing’ level are likely to need more support than those in the ‘exceeding’ and ‘strong’ levels.

While a range of adjustments are available for students, exemption from NAPLAN proficiency ratings may be suitable for some students with disability and for some students with a language background other than English. Students who are exempt are not assessed but are included in NAPLAN results.



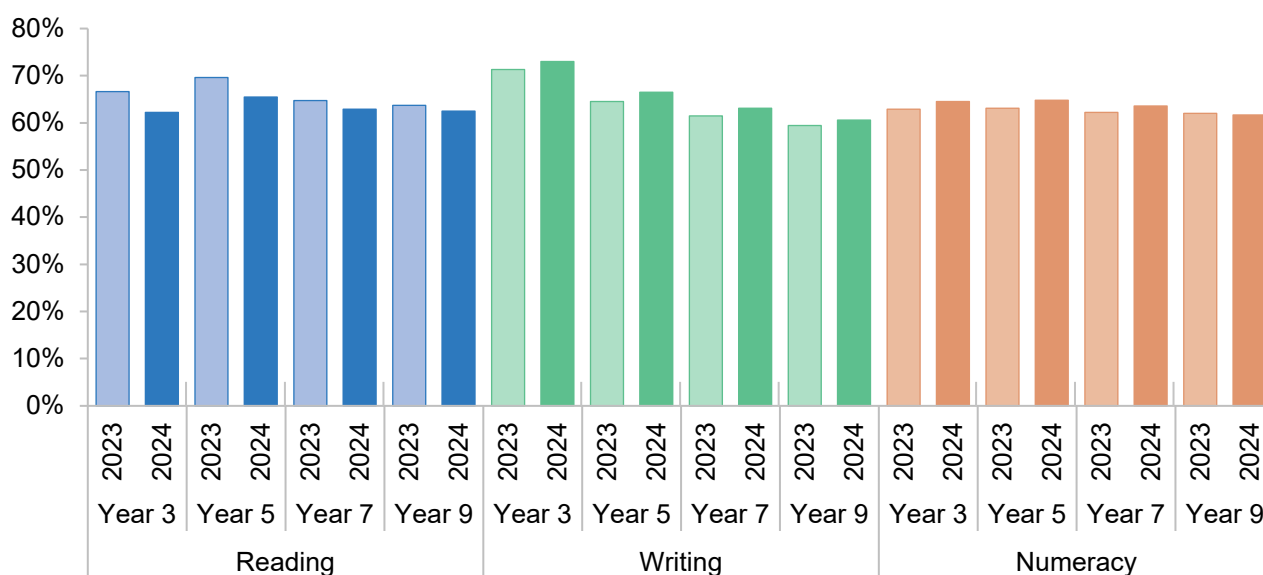
Box 2.15 – Data considerations: NAPLAN proficiency levels

Absent and withdrawn students are considered non-participating. The proportion of participating students varies across jurisdictions. Student participation in NAPLAN testing in reading, writing and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, by Indigenous status, is presented in table SE5c.4 on the PC CtG dashboard.

In 2024, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were assessed as at or above 'developing' in reading ranged from 62.2% in Year 3 to 65.5% in Year 5 (figure 2.23). The largest decrease since the previous year was 4.4 percentage points for Year 3 students and the smallest was 1.2 percentage points for Year 9 students. The students whose writing proficiency was assessed as 'developing', 'strong' or 'exceeding' in 2024 was highest for students in Year 3 (73.0%) and had increased the most since 2023 for students in Year 5 (2.0 percentage points). In the numeracy assessment, the proportion of students who achieved at or above the 'developing' proficiency level increased 1.6, 1.7 and 1.4 percentage points for students in Years 3, 5, and 7, respectively, and decreased 0.3 percentage points for students in Year 9 since 2023.

Figure 2.23 – National student proficiency in NAPLAN^a

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 assessed as 'developing', 'strong' or 'exceeding' in reading, writing and numeracy, 2023 and 2024 (Indicator 5c)



a. Around 3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were exempt from NAPLAN assessment across each year level and testing area. This increased slightly from 2023 to 2024, between 0.1 and 0.3 percentage points. See table SE5c.4 on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.

Source: ACARA National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy national results. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables SE5c.1–3.



In 2024, the Australian Capital Territory was the jurisdiction that most often had the highest proportion of students assessed as being in the 'exceeding' proficiency level, followed by Victoria. Across all assessment areas and year levels, the Northern Territory was the jurisdiction with the highest proportion of students assessed as being in the 'needs additional support' proficiency level.

Box 2.16 – Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to achieve their full learning potential

Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, school attendance and NAPLAN proficiency are recognised as drivers of progress towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reaching their full learning potential and achieving Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment.

The importance of these indicators is also recognised in the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA), which is an agreement on school education signed by all Australian governments that came into effect on 1 January 2025. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) and the Coalition of Peaks worked in partnership with governments to develop the BFSA, which states that “working in partnership will lead to a better and fairer education system, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students” (p. 3).

The BFSA runs until 2034 and reaffirms all Australian governments' commitment under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years attaining a Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96% by 2031. It also commits all governments to:

- increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates to pre-COVID (2019) levels by 2030
- reaching parity in attendance rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the overall student population by 2035
- achieving an upwards trend in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as 'strong' or 'exceeding' in NAPLAN.

Source: DoE (2025b).

Outcome 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways

In 2021, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who completed a tertiary qualification had increased but was not on track to meet the target by 2031³⁶

The target for socio-economic outcome area six of the Agreement is that by 2031, 70% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years will have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above).

³⁶ The first progress reporting for Target 6 occurred in 2023 using 2021 data. The data for Target 6 is updated every five years and is sourced from the ABS Census of Population and Housing. The next census will take place in 2026. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard and pages 54–55 of the 2023 ADCR for more information and figures for this target.



In 2021, 47.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years, nationally, had completed vocational and/or a higher education qualification of Certificate level III or above. This is a positive change (an increase of 4.7 percentage points) since 2016 (baseline year).

All jurisdictions have seen some level of improvement in tertiary qualification completion

While there are currently no state and territory targets, the progress made in each state and territory does contribute to the national outcomes. The assessment shown below reflects an improvement (positive progress) in the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years since 2016 (baseline year) in every for state and territory toward Target 6.

State and territory assessment of progress (2016 to 2021)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
6	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→

Legend	→	←	▢	••
	Improvement	Worsening	No change	No assessment

Note: The assessments should be used with caution as they are based on a limited number of data points.

Building a fuller picture of further education pathways

Further education in Australia takes place in a complex tertiary education system made up of two interconnected sectors. Higher education occurs at universities, while vocational education and training (VET) can be undertaken at a registered training provider like a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute or through on the job training in an apprenticeship or traineeship. Four supporting indicators present additional information to help understand how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaging with further education.

The first two indicators report on university commencement, attrition and completion rates (Indicator 6a) and application offer and acceptance rates (Indicator 6b), building a fuller picture of the ways people enter, move through and leave the higher education sector. The second two indicators provide insight into the VET sector, with Indicator 6c recording VET commencement, attrition and completion rates and Indicator 6g reporting on the outcomes and satisfaction levels of VET qualification completers.³⁷

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people commenced university and left after the first year

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are commencing university. In 2023, 5,186 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people commenced a bachelor's degree at an Australian university – a 6.7% increase from the baseline year (2016), but less than the peak of 5,460 people in 2021.

At the national level, 26.0% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who commenced a bachelor's degree in 2022 did not return the following year, which is 1.8 percentage points more than

³⁷ For more detailed information on available supporting indicator data, refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.



the baseline year (2016). Some of these students may have returned to study in later years. The trends in first-year attrition rates vary across jurisdictions. Between 2016 and 2022, they decreased by 8.8 percentage points in the Australian Capital Territory and 3.4 percentage points in Victoria. Over the same period, there were increases of 8.7 percentage points in the Northern Territory, 4.7 percentage points in Tasmania and 4.1 percentage points in New South Wales (figure 2.24).

Figure 2.24 – Change in first-year attrition rates, by jurisdiction

Percentage point change in first-year university attrition rates from 2016 to 2022 (Indicator 6a)



Source: Derived from Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished) Higher Education Statistics Collection. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE6a.2.

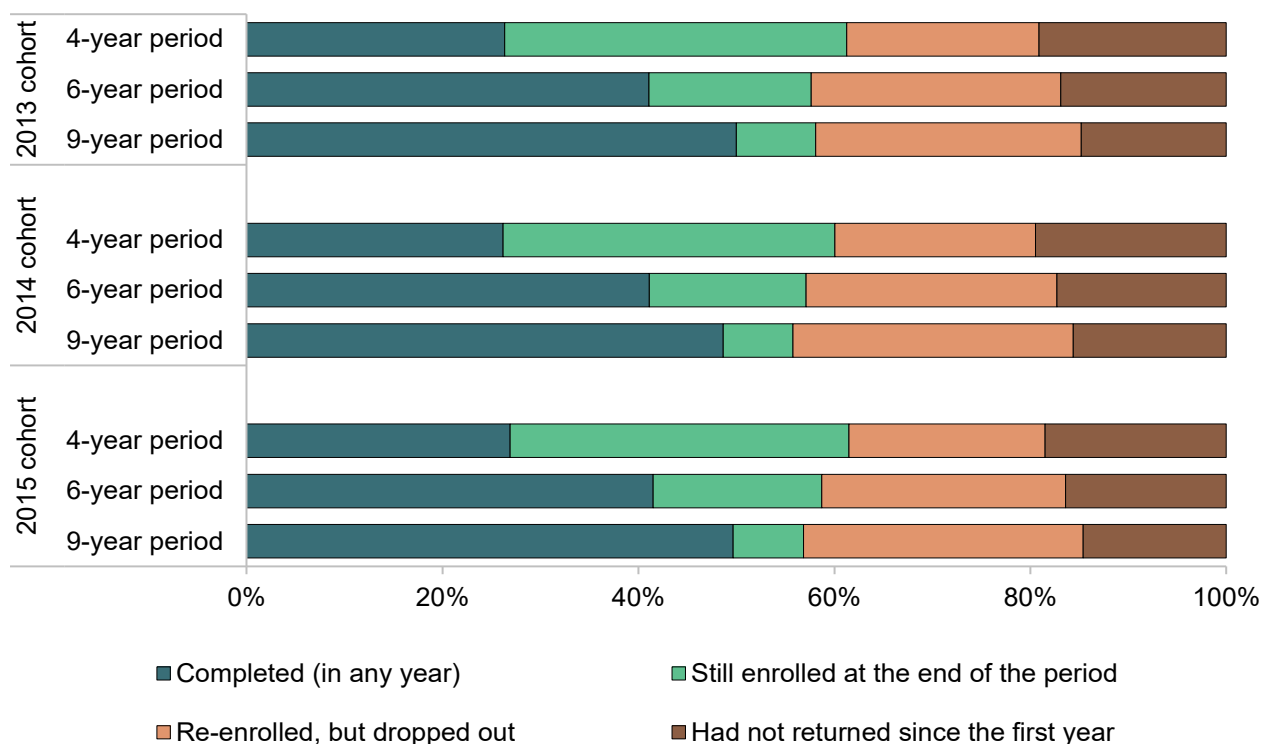
The time that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students take to finish their degree has largely stayed the same

There are many ways to complete a higher education degree – some students progress steadily and complete a degree within four years, while others study part-time, take breaks or retake courses. For this reason, university completion is measured over four, six and nine years in Indicator 6a. For example, 26.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who commenced study in 2015 had completed their degree during the four-year period to 2018. This increased to 41.5% over the six-year period to 2020, and 49.6% over the nine-year period to 2023 (figure 2.25).



Figure 2.25 – University completion rates, by year of and time since commencement

Four-year, six-year and nine-year completion rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who commenced study in 2013, 2014 and 2015 (Indicator 6a)



Source: Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished) Higher Education Statistics Collection. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data tables SE6a.3–5.

The time that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students take to finish their degree has largely stayed the same over the years. On average, six-year and nine-year completion rates are around 15 and 23 percentage points higher, respectively, than four-year completion rates.

More people applied to university, but offer and acceptance rates were lower

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are making more applications to Australian universities to study for an undergraduate degree – recorded under new Indicator 6b. In 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made 7,637 applications, which is the highest number reported and a 10.6% increase from the baseline year (2016). The number of applications has increased since 2016 in all jurisdictions except Western Australia.

Since the baseline year, both the number and proportion of undergraduate applications have increased for females but decreased for males. Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females made 5,461 applications in 2021, which represents 71.5% of all applications for that year and a 17.9% increase since 2016. Over the same period, the number of applications made by males decreased by



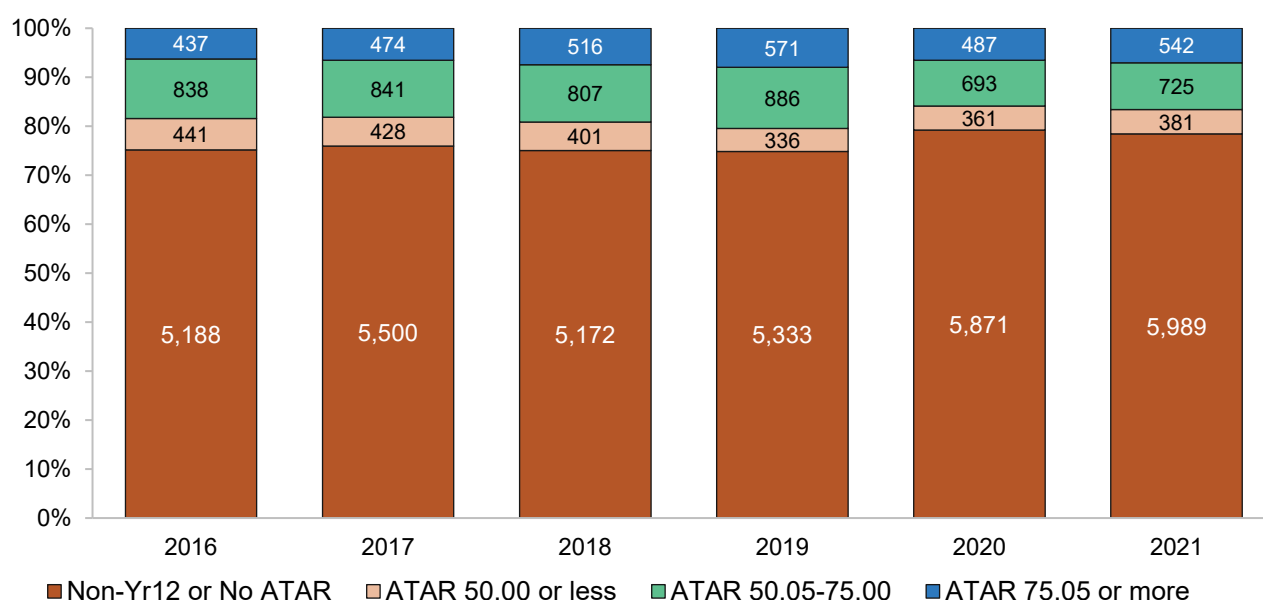
4.2% to 2,176 applications, and the proportion declined 4.4 percentage points to 28.5% of total applications.³⁸

There are different ways to apply for entry into university. People with the required ATAR, which is generally above 50 depending on the chosen institution and degree, can choose to begin their studies directly after completing Year 12. Others may enter university at other times through bridging courses or VET pathways.

Most of the increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applications to university has come from pathways that do not require an ATAR or Year 12 certificate. Nationally in 2021, there were 5,989 undergraduate applications from these pathways, constituting a 15.4% increase from 2016. By 2021, 78.4% of all applications were from non-Year 12 or ATAR pathways, up from 75.1% in 2016 (figure 2.26).

Figure 2.26 – Higher education applications, by ATAR range or pathway^a

Proportion of total applications by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for a domestic undergraduate university place from each ATAR range or pathway, 2016–2021 (Indicator 6b)



a. A small proportion of people apply to more than one tertiary admission centre, which may result in some double counting of the number of applications from the same person.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished) Higher Education Statistics Collection. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE6b.4.

While an increasing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are offered an undergraduate university degree and accept it, offer and acceptance rates (relative to the number of applications) have declined since the baseline year (2016). In 2021, 79.7% of undergraduate university applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people resulted in an offer, which is 1.8 percentage points lower than in 2016. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that accepted an undergraduate position declined 4.1 percentage points since 2016, reaching 60.2% in 2021.

³⁸ This report uses the terms 'male' and 'female' to refer to data disaggregated by sex. Data disaggregated by gender is not yet available for this indicator. For more information on gender and sex in the ADCR, refer to box 1.1.



The offer and acceptance rates for applicants with an ATAR of 50.0 or less increased 5.2 and 8.7 percentage points, respectively, since the baseline year, bucking the trend of decreasing rates experienced by most other groups over this time.

VET commencements have increased recently, but completion rates have decreased

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged under 35 years are commencing more VET qualifications. The number of VET qualifications at Certificate level III or above commenced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased by 3.5 % from the baseline year (2016) to 41,155 in 2023. This is lower than the peak of 43,676 VET qualifications commenced in 2019.

While the number of VET qualifications that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have commenced has increased, previous increases in four-year VET completion rates have recently been reversed. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students aged under 35 years who commenced a VET qualification in 2021, 34.3% are expected to have completed their qualification within four years (by 2025). This is roughly equivalent to the observed four-year completion rate of 34.1% for students who commenced in the baseline year (2016), but lower than the observed and expected rates for those who commenced between 2017 and 2020.

VET qualification completer goal achievement or satisfaction levels have seen little change³⁹

Although results vary slightly from year to year, there has been no significant change in the proportion of VET qualification completers who felt their training helped them achieve their goals or were satisfied with its quality from the baseline year (2016) – as reported in new Indicator 6g.

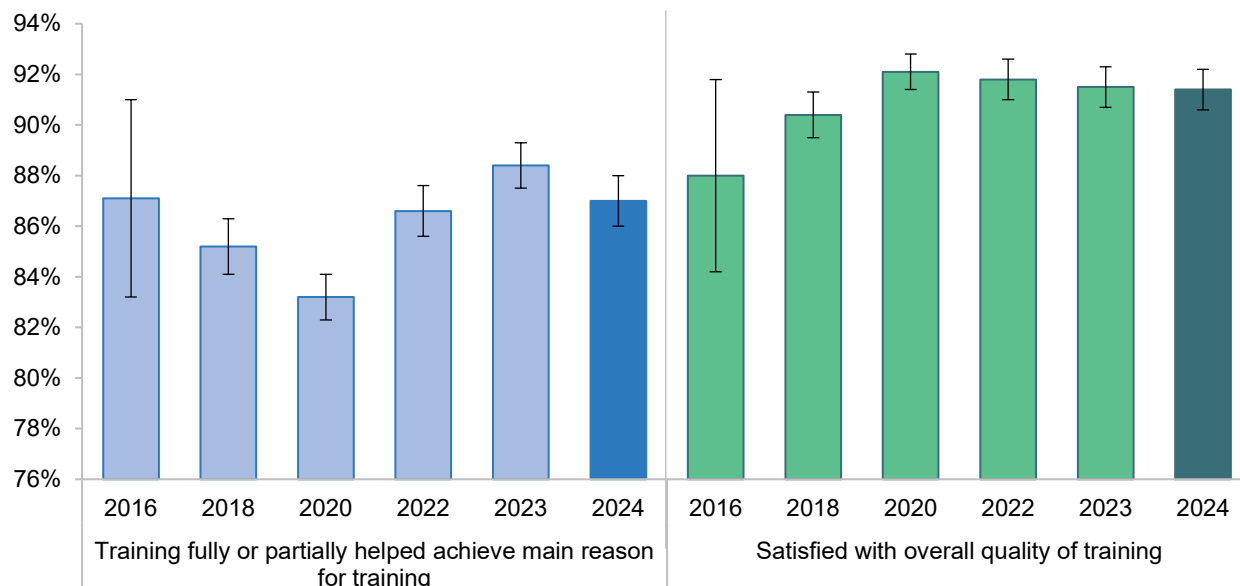
In 2024, 87.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–34 years who completed a VET qualification reported that training fully or partially helped them achieve their main reason for training, while 91.4% reported that they were satisfied with the quality of training they received. The proportion of completers who reported that training helped them was 3.8 percentage points higher than the lowest level since 2016, which was 83.2% in 2020. However, there were no significant differences between the proportions of completers aged 15–34 years in 2024 and 2016, who reported achieving the main reason for training and satisfaction with the quality of training – in part because of the large 95% confidence intervals in the baseline year (figure 2.27).

³⁹ This supporting indicator, as set out in the Agreement, refers to 'VET graduate outcomes and satisfaction levels'. This report uses the term 'VET qualification completer' rather than VET graduate for consistency with the data provided by National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).



Figure 2.27 – VET qualification completer outcomes and satisfaction^a

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander VET qualification completers aged 15–34 years who reported that training fully or partially helped achieve main reason for training, and who were satisfied with overall quality of training, 2016–2024 (Indicator 6g)



a. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: NCVER (unpublished) National Student Outcomes Survey. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables SE6g.1–2.

The proportions for VET qualification completers aged 35 years or older were similar to those of the younger cohort, meaning there was no significant change in outcomes or satisfaction for this age group between 2016 and 2024.

Box 2.17 – National Skills Agreement supporting improved VET outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The National Skills Agreement (NSA) is a five-year agreement between the Australian Government and state and territory governments to ensure a high quality, responsive and accessible VET system, which came into effect in January 2024. It was the first national agreement related to education and training to include clauses that aim to embed the four Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The NSA is also the first national agreement to include standalone funding arrangements to implement agreed reforms and Closing the Gap skills initiatives. Under the NSA, the Australian Government will invest up to \$214 million over five years. This includes:

- up to \$36 million to progress a national partnership framework with the Coalition of Peaks, to ensure active engagement on VET policy with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities
- up to \$166 million in contributions to state and territory governments to support place-based Closing the Gap initiatives in VET, to be matched by state and territory government funding contributions.



Box 2.17 – National Skills Agreement supporting improved VET outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The NSA also commits state and territory governments to developing bilateral implementation plans with the Australian Government in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

These plans must contribute to implementing the Priority Reforms, including by investing into the community-controlled and owned VET sector, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander VET workforce and the cultural competency of mainstream VET organisations. The Australian Government is to favour proposals that have a strong focus on the capability, sustainability and growth of the community-controlled and owned sector.

Source: DEWR (2024).

Outcome 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education

In 2021, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people fully engaged in employment, education or training had increased but the target was not on track to be met by 2031⁴⁰

The target for socio-economic outcome area seven of the National Agreement is that by 2031, 67% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are engaged in employment, education or training. Nationally, 58.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–24 years were fully engaged in employment, education or training in 2021. There has been an increase (0.8 percentage points) since the baseline year (2016) but the target is not on track to be met.

Most jurisdictions have seen improvements in youth engagement

While there are currently no state and territory targets, the progress made in each state and territory does contribute to the national outcome. The assessment shown below reflects an improvement (positive progress) in the outcomes for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since 2016 (baseline year) in most states and territories.

State and territory assessment of progress (2016 to 2021)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
7	→	→	→	→	←	→	→	←

Legend	→	←	⊠	••
	Improvement	Worsening	No change	No assessment

Note: The assessments should be used with caution as they are based on a limited number of data points.

⁴⁰ This is the most current progress of assessment for Target 7, but it should be used with caution as it is based on a limited number of data points. Assessment of progress last occurred in 2023, using 2021 data. The data for Target 7 is updated every five years and is sourced from the ABS Census of Population and Housing. The next census will take place in 2026. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard and pages 56–57 of the 2023 ADCR for more information and figures for this target.



Summary: Education and training

Progress towards targets is mixed.

Most outcomes are improving but not on track to meet targets.

New data shows that early childhood education is increasing and on track.



Early childhood education is increasing and on track **(Target 3)**.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children spent more hours in preschool (Indicator 3a).
The number of community-controlled early years services continued to grow (Indicator 3b).



Student learning potential is improving but not on track **(Target 5)**.

School attendance rates were decreasing (Indicator 5a).
Some NAPLAN results have improved (Indicator 5c).



Further education pathways are improving but not on track **(Target 6)**.

The time that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students take to finish their degree has largely stayed the same over the years (Indicator 6a).
More people applied to university but offer and acceptance rates were lower (Indicator 6b).
VET commencements have increased recently but completion rates were decreasing (Indicator 6c).
VET qualification completion goal achievement or satisfaction levels have seen little change (Indicator 6g).



Youth engagement is improving but not on track **(Target 7)**.

Legend



On track



Improvement,
but not on track



Worsening



No change



No
assessment



2.5 Economic participation

Economic participation refers to engagement in work or other activity that provides access to economic resources (AIHW 2024a). Economic development denotes improvements in wellbeing derived from those resources (McDonald et al. 2019). For tens of thousands of years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have participated in economic activity according to their Lore/Law to sustainably support the needs of their communities (Langton and Corn 2023). Traditional economic activity included hunting, fishing, foraging, storing and cultivating plants, managing the landscape and waterways for harvesting and sharing resources between community members (Koungoulos et al. 2024; Pascoe and Gammage 2021; Rose et al. 2016). Long-distance trading was central to these economies, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people crossing the continent along trade-routes and Songlines and exchanging resources with seafaring traders from Asia (Crabtree et al. 2021; Neale and Kelly 2020; Langton et al. 2006).

Today, Indigenous peoples possess internationally recognised rights to be fully included in economic development efforts, but colonisation has inhibited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's economic progress and engagement (Coalition of Peaks 2025; Tauli-Corpuz 2014; UN 2007). Government policies actively disrupted traditional economies by forcibly dispossessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of their lands and restricting their movement (Langton 2011). Systemic and interpersonal discrimination, exploitative working conditions and government control over employment and income have prevented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from fully and freely engaging in the Western economic system (Coalition of Peaks 2025; Pearson 2021). These restrictions hinder wealth formation, limit access to resources and entrench economic inequality (Liddle 2018; Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2006).

Despite these historical and ongoing challenges, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economy is booming. The latest Indigenous business Snapshot shows Indigenous businesses contribute more than \$16 billion to the Australian economy, employ 116,795 people and pay \$4.2 billion in wages (Evans et al. 2024). The contribution of this Indigenous economic ecosystem to the Australian economy and community is far greater than the sum of its economic activities. These contributions include opportunities for Indigenous employment and self-determination, intergenerational wealth generation, sharing of Indigenous knowledge, provision of culturally sensitive services to communities and trust-building within the community (Evans et al. 2024). Research also shows that Indigenous businesses are up to 100 times more likely to hire an Indigenous employee compared to non-Indigenous businesses (Supply Nation and First Australians Capital 2018).

A consistent income stream, whether through secure employment or entrepreneurial activity, can provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with greater certainty and economic agency (AIHW 2024a; Eva et al. 2024; Collins and Norman 2018). Benefits from these forms of economic participation can also flow to individuals' families and communities through employment opportunities, communal social networks and intergenerational wealth accumulation (Eva et al. 2023; Norman 2021). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have continuously pursued equitable economic participation through efforts like organising job walk-offs, protesting for equality and seeking restitution and remedy through the legal system (*Street v State of Western Australia* [2024] FCA 1368; Norman 2021; Liddle 2018).



Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still face ongoing structural barriers to economic participation and development, such as institutionalised racism, intergenerational disadvantage and systematic undervaluation of traditional activity (Liddle 2018; Manero et al. 2022; QAIHC 2023). Other obstacles may include geographic constraints, inappropriate education and training, inconsistent support for young people, lack of capital and investment, and limited access to culturally safe opportunities (Evans et al. 2024; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs 2021; Dodson 2010). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have continued to strengthen their engagement in the economy despite these difficulties, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business activity and employment expanding significantly and materially benefiting communities (Evans et al. 2024).

Economic participation and development are central to self-determination, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to define and pursue their own self determined economic development priorities (Coalition of Peaks 2025; Eva et al. 2024). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to take action and collaborate in partnership with governments to help ensure greater economic participation and development opportunities for individuals and communities (Coalition of Peaks 2025). Further efforts to support improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation and development include local employment programs and promotion of culturally inclusive education and workplaces (Liddle 2018; Eva et al. 2023), comprehensive Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property and cultural rights (Janke 2021; PC 2022a) and legal and financial assistance to achieve stronger land ownership rights (Campbell and Hunt 2013).

Box 2.18 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available in 2025 for socio-economic outcome 8.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 8: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities	
• Employment (Target 8)	2021
• Caring responsibilities (8c)**	2021
• Employment by occupation (8d)	2021

Note: **Indicates a new supporting indicator since the 2024 ADCR.



Outcome 8: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

In 2021, there was an improvement in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed, with the target on track to be met by 2031⁴¹

The target for socio-economic outcome area eight is that by 2031, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed will increase to 62%.

In 2021, 55.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years were employed nationally, which is an increase of 4.7 percentage points from the baseline year (2016). The latest assessment of progress indicates that the target of 62% by 2031 is on track to be met.

Almost all jurisdictions have seen improvements in employment

While there are currently no state and territory targets, the progress made in each jurisdiction does contribute to national outcomes. The employment rates in most states and territories have improved since the baseline.

State and territory assessment of progress (2016 to 2021)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
8	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	←

Legend	→	←	■	●●
	Improvement	Worsening	No change	No assessment

Note: The assessments should be used with caution as they are based on a limited number of data points.

Building a fuller picture of economic participation

Two supporting indicators help provide a fuller picture of progress on economic participation. The first reports on the employment status of people with caring responsibilities, which can affect their ability to participate in economic activity (Indicator 8c). The second provides contextual information by reporting on the occupations in which people are employed and was last updated in the 2023 ADCR (Indicator 8d).⁴²

More people who provided unpaid care or assistance were employed

Many people provide unpaid care or assistance to their spouses, children, family members, kin or other people in their community. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, care is often embedded in culture through complex and overlapping kinship systems that determine mutual relationships,

⁴¹ The first progress reporting for Target 8 occurred in 2023 using 2021 data. The data for Target 8 is updated every five years and is sourced from the ABS Census of Population and Housing. The next census will take place in 2026. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard and pages 58–59 of the 2023 ADCR for more information and figures for this target.

⁴² The PC CtG dashboard and page 59 of the 2023 ADCR include more information and figures for Indicator 8d. For more detailed information on available supporting indicator data, refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.



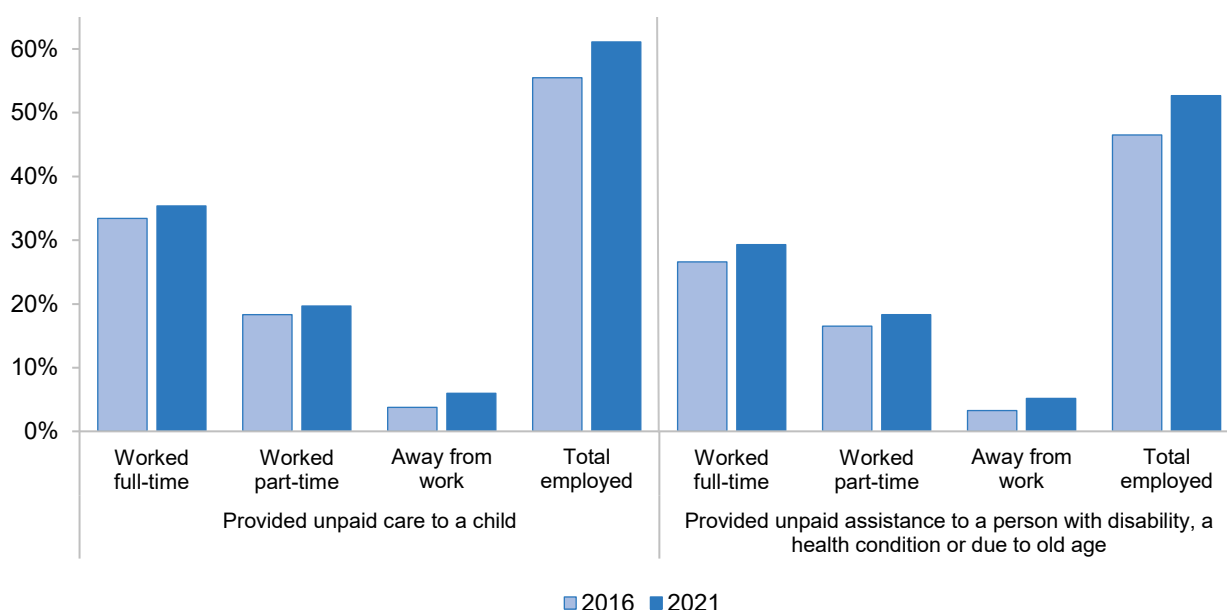
responsibilities and obligations within communities (Brinckley et al. 2022; SNAICC 2008). Unpaid care and assistance can take up significant amounts of time and resources, meaning that people with these responsibilities may work less than people who do not care for others.⁴³

Nearly 160,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years provided unpaid care or assistance in 2021, as reported under the new Indicator 8c. Nationally, 61.1% of people providing unpaid care to a child were employed, which is a 5.6 percentage point increase from 2016 (figure 2.28). The proportion of people providing care who were employed but away from work increased the most (2.2 percentage points), followed by people working full-time (2.0 percentage points) and people working part-time (1.4 percentage points).

Over the same period (2016 to 2021), there was a 6.2 percentage point increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people providing unpaid assistance to a person with disability, with a health condition or due to old age, who were employed – from 46.5% (2016) to 52.7% (2021). This growth in employment was driven largely by the 2.7 percentage point increase in the proportion of people working full-time, with accompanying 1.8 and 1.9 percentage point increases in people who worked part-time or were away from work, respectively.

Figure 2.28 – Employment status of people who provided care or assistance^{a,b}

Proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years providing unpaid care to a child or unpaid assistance to a person with disability, a health condition or due to old age, who were employed, by employment status, 2016 and 2021 (Indicator 8c).



a. COVID-19 lockdowns and transfer payments may have affected employment status in some jurisdictions in 2021, as labour force status is based on the week prior to Census Night. **b.** Care or assistance status is based on the two weeks prior to Census Night.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables SE8c.1–2.


⁴³ Unpaid care work has a disproportionate impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (Klein et al. 2023). Future data development for Indicator 8c will seek to disaggregate data by gender.



Compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who did not provide care or assistance, those who were caring for children were more likely to work part time or take time away from work, while those assisting someone with disability, a health condition or old age were more likely not to be employed at all. In 2021, 25.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who provided unpaid care to a child either worked part-time or were employed but away from work. This was 6.1 percentage points higher than the 19.6% of those not providing care. At the same time, 47.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people providing unpaid assistance to a person with disability, a health condition or old age were either unemployed or not in the labour force – 6.2 percentage points more than the proportion of those who did not provide assistance (41.1%).

Summary: Economic participation


There is clear progress on outcomes for economic participation.
The target for employment is on track to be met.




There has been an improvement in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years who are employed, and the target of 62% is on track to be met by 2031 **(Target 8)**.

More people who provided unpaid care or assistance were employed (Indicator 8c).


Legend




On track




Improvement, but not on track




Worsening



No change



No assessment



85

2.6 Housing

Housing is a basic human need and is central for overall health and wellbeing (AIHW 2019). Living in poor quality housing is a risk factor for physical and mental health and may impact a person’s ability to fully participate in society (PC 2022b).

In Australia, the long-term focus of governments’ efforts to address the housing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is generally centred on addressing overcrowding (PC 2022b). Overcrowded housing can impact health, education and social outcomes, and can reduce a person’s sense of safety and security. On average, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household sizes tend to be larger than other households. This is influenced by factors including the preference of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to live with more people in a household – enabling a greater connection to family and culture – and the limited supply of affordable housing (Brackertz and Wilkinson 2017; SCRGSP 2020). The definition of overcrowding in Australia is based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard, which does not reflect the culture and preferences of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia (SCRGSP 2020).

Meeting the diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requires culturally appropriate housing design and appropriate facilities. Increasing the availability and accessibility of social housing and addressing housing affordability may contribute to reducing overcrowding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Box 2.19 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available in 2024 for socio-economic outcome 9.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need	
• People living in appropriately sized dwellings (Target 9A)	2021
• Access to and quality of essential services (Target 9B)	TBC
• Acceptable standard of housing (9e)*	2022-23
• Social housing (9g)*	2024

Note: *Indicates where a new year of data has been published since the 2024 ADCR. Data considerations are provided in box 2.20 and box 2.21.



Outcome 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need

There are two targets for socio-economic outcome area nine of the National Agreement, however data is only available for Target 9A at this time.

In 2021, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing was not on track to meet the target by 2031⁴⁴

The first target for socio-economic outcome area nine (Target 9A) is that by 2031, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing will increase to 88%. Nationally, 81.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were living in appropriately sized housing in 2021, which is a 2.5 percentage point increase since the baseline (2016).

Box 2.20 – Data considerations: appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing

There is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes an overcrowded household. The ABS uses the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS). According to the CNOS, overcrowding is defined as a situation in which one or more additional bedrooms would be required to adequately house its inhabitants, given the number, age, sex and relationships of household members. It specifies that:

- there should be no more than 2 people per bedroom
- children aged less than 5 of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom
- children aged 5 or over of the opposite sex should have separate bedrooms
- children aged less than 18 of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom
- single household members aged 18 or over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents and couples
- a lone person household may reasonably occupy a bed sitter.

The CNOS is widely used in Australia and internationally. However, the relevance and appropriateness of CNOS in depicting dwelling utilisation and overcrowding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has not been assessed.

Classification of 'Levels of overcrowding specific to Australian conditions' is to be considered under the Data Development Plan endorsed by the Joint Council on Closing the Gap in August 2022. More information is available on the PC CtG dashboard.

Source: AIHW (2025).

⁴⁴ The data used to assess progress for this target is updated every five years and is sourced from the ABS Census of Population and Housing. The next census will take place in 2026. The PC CtG dashboard and page 60 of the 2023 ADCR include more information and figures for this target.



Most jurisdictions have seen improvements in appropriately sized housing

Although there are currently no state and territory targets, progress from each jurisdiction contributes to reaching national targets. Since 2016, access to appropriately sized housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in most states and territories has improved (except for people living in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory).

State and territory assessment of progress (2016 to 2021)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
9A	→	→	→	→	→	←	←	→

Legend	→	←	▤	●●
	Improvement	Worsening	No change	No assessment

Note: The assessments should be used with caution as they are based on a limited number of data points.

There is no data to establish a baseline or assess progress toward Target 9B

The second target for socio-economic outcome area nine (Target 9B) sets a goal for access to and quality of essential services. At the time of publication, there is no data source available that includes all of the required data elements. A baseline has not been confirmed and progress cannot be assessed.

State and territory assessment of progress

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
9B	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●

Legend	→	←	▤	●●
	Improvement	Worsening	No change	No assessment

Building a fuller picture of housing

Two supporting indicators help provide a fuller picture of progress on appropriate and affordable housing aligned with priorities and need. The first relates to housing quality, reporting contextual information on the proportion of households living in housing of an acceptable standard, with no major structural problems and with working facilities (Indicator 9e). The second contextual indicator provides insight into the use of affordable housing by reporting the number and proportion of households residing in social housing (Indicator 9g) (box 2.21 outlines data considerations).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ For more detailed information on available supporting indicator data, refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.



Box 2.21 – Data considerations: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households and social housing

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households

The data source for Indicator 9e is the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey and the data for Indicator 9g comes from the ABS Census of Population and Housing and the AIHW National Housing Assistance Data Repository data collections. In these data sets, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household is defined as any household in which at least one resident identifies as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Social housing

Social housing refers to government-subsidised short-term and long-term dwellings rented through a social housing provider. There are four types of social housing reported on in Indicator 9g:

- public housing – dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by state and territory housing authorities
- state owned and managed Indigenous housing – dwellings owned and managed by state and territory housing authorities and government Indigenous housing agencies that are allocated only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants
- community housing – rental housing managed by community-based organisations that lease properties or have received a capital or recurrent subsidy from government
- Indigenous community housing – dwellings owned or leased and managed by Indigenous community housing organisations and community councils.

A high or increasing number of households in social housing may be seen as desirable, as it can indicate greater availability or access to social housing. However, it is important to consider this in the broader context of how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need this type of housing and why. Refer to socio-economic outcome area nine on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.

The quality of housing remains consistent

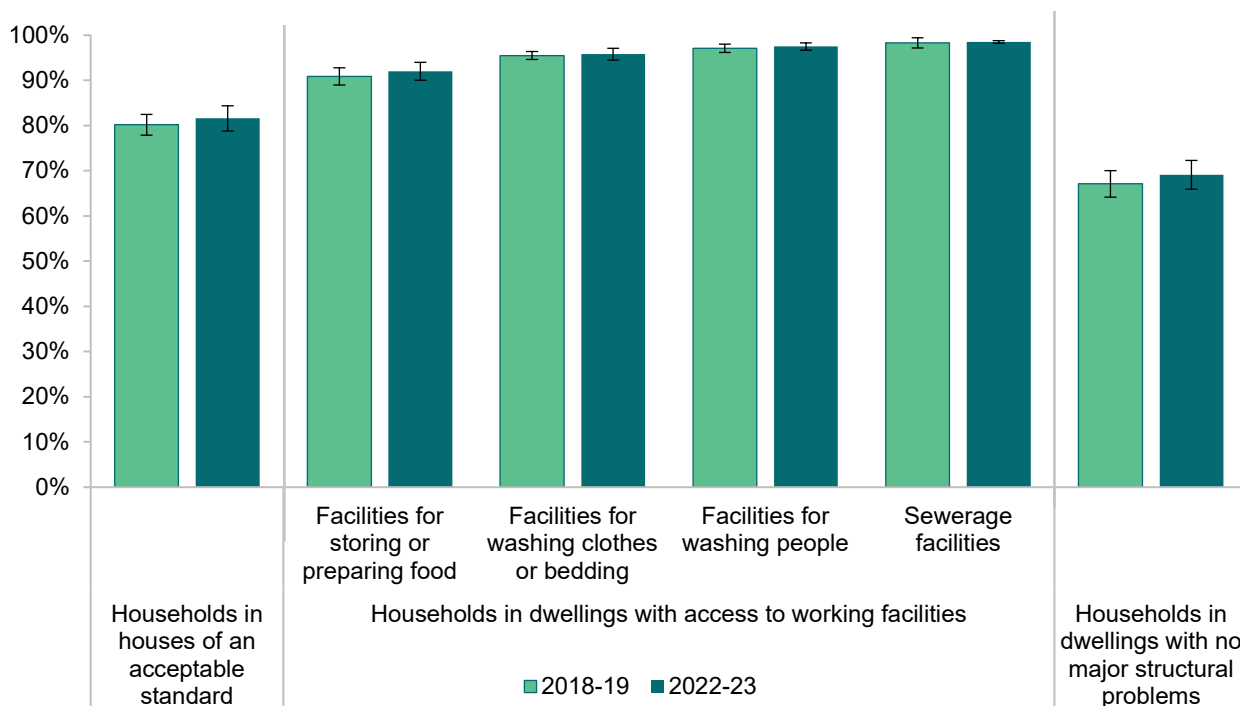
In 2022-23, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were living in housing of an acceptable standard. Specifically, 81.6% met the defined threshold of having four working facilities (for washing people, for washing clothes or bedding, for storing or preparing food, and a working sewerage system) and no more than two major structural problems, which is similar to 2018-19 (figure 2.29).

Further data is available to provide context on specific aspects of housing quality. In 2022-23, more than nine in ten households had working facilities for washing people (97.5%), washing clothes or bedding (95.8%), storing or preparing food (92.0%) and sewerage (98.5%), and 69.1% lived in dwellings with no major structural problems. All of these proportions were similar to 2018-19.



Figure 2.29 – Standard of housing^a

Proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in housing of an acceptable standard, with no major structural problems, and with working facilities, 2018-19 and 2022-23 (Indicator 9e)



a. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables SE9e.1–3.

More households are renting through social housing programs⁴⁶

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in social housing programs has been consistently increasing since the baseline year (2016). From 2016 to 2024, the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households residing in all types of social housing increased by 47.0% at the national level, reaching a high of 84,490 households.

This increase in social housing was reflected across all four types of housing. There was a 114.3% increase in the number of households in community housing, which is the biggest increase over this period and followed by state owned and managed Indigenous housing (53.2%), public housing (38.8%) and Indigenous community housing (33.4%).

The distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households across social housing types has shifted over time. By 2024, the proportion of households living in Indigenous community housing and public housing had declined, falling by 2.9 and 2.1 percentage points since 2016, respectively. These

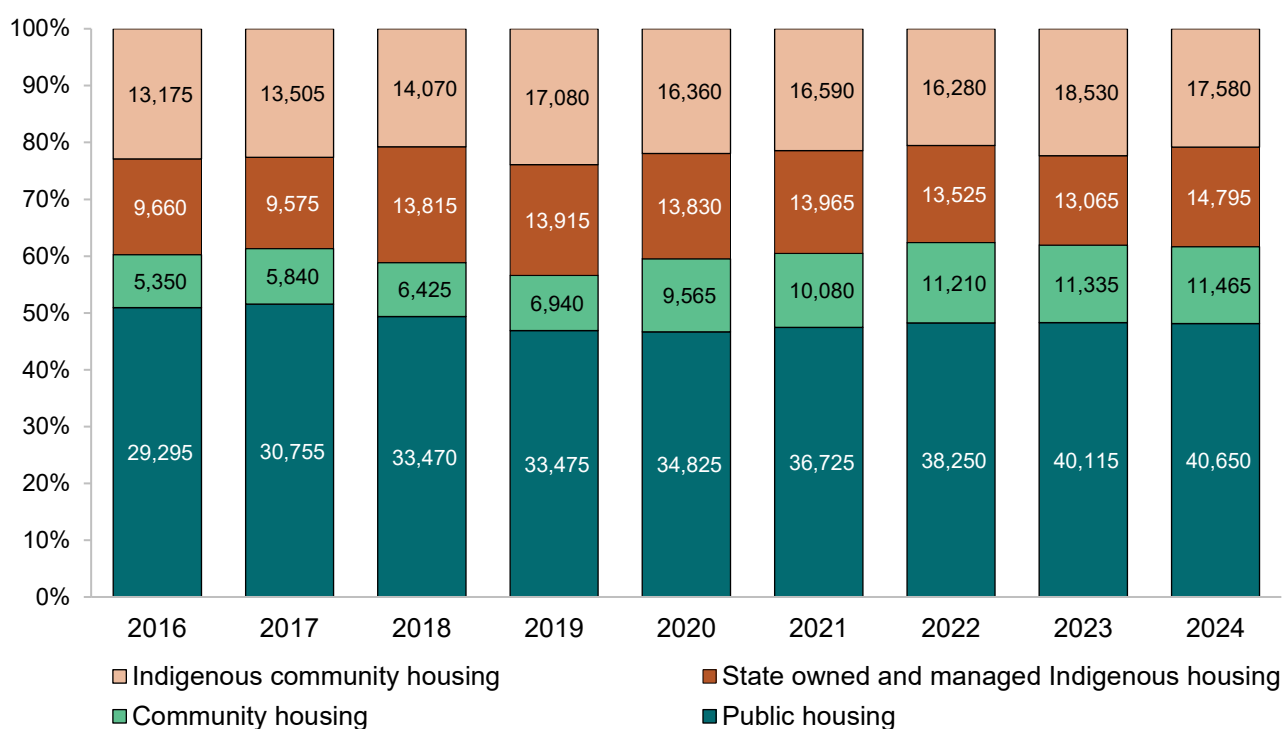
⁴⁶ Data on the proportion of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households that were residing in social housing (SEg.1–2) was last updated in July 2024. Between 2016 and 2021, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households that were residing in a social housing dwelling decreased 4 percentage points to 18.5%. Refer to pages 54–55 of the 2024 ADCR for more information and figures.



were offset by increases in the share of households living in community housing and state owned and managed Indigenous housing, which rose by 4.3 and 0.7 percentage points, respectively. In 2024, public housing remained the most common social housing arrangement at 48.1% of all households in social housing, followed by Indigenous community housing at 33.4% (figure 2.30).

Figure 2.30 – Households renting through a social housing program

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in social housing, by type of social housing provider, 2016–2024 (Indicator 9g)




Source: Derived from AIHW (unpublished) National Housing Assistance Data Repository. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE9g.3.

Increases in households renting through social housing programs varied by remoteness area. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in social housing increased the most in very remote areas (68.7%), followed by major cities (58.7%), remote areas (47.1%), inner regional areas (39.5%) and finally outer regional areas (26.9%).




Summary: Housing

There have been improvements to the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized housing.
There is still no data available to report on the target for access to essential services.

 There has been an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing, but the target is not on track to be met (**Target 9A**).

The quality of housing remains consistent (Indicator 9e).

More households are renting through social housing programs (Indicator 9g).

 It is not possible to report progress on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household access to essential services as the required data is not available (**Target 9B**).

Legend


On track


Improvement,
but not on track


Worsening


No change


No
assessment



2.7 Country

The intrinsic relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ancestral lands and waters forms the bedrock of their cultures, livelihoods and social fabric (Hartwig et al. 2021; Lowitja Institute 2020). This connection to Country is profound and spiritual; it transcends mere land ownership and serves as a vital source of resilience and wellbeing, which encompasses physical, social, emotional, cultural and ecological dimensions (Dudgeon et al. 2020; Schultz et al. 2018; Zubrick et al. 2014).

Colonisation and subsequent government policies of dispossession and alienation from traditional lands have prevented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities from practicing culture on Country (Butler et al. 2019). This includes preventing participation in traditional ceremonies, language preservation activities and environmental management, which has contributed to poorer health and wellbeing (Ganesharajah 2009; Zubrick et al. 2014).

In response to colonisation and historical dispossession, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have led sustained campaigns for greater land rights (Hartwig et al. 2020). Recognition of native title and land claims are a result of these campaigns and reflect a step towards greater recognition and protection of the traditional system of law, ownership and customs over lands and waters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (ANTAR 2022; Central Land Council 2024).

Other factors that support and safeguard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationships with their land and waters include incorporating traditional knowledge into environmental management (Barber and Jackson 2017; Lowitja Institute 2020), upholding connection to Country through ownership and management of land and water titles (AHRC 2020; Lowitja Institute 2020) and facilitating economic opportunities that empower communities.



Box 2.22 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available in 2025 for socio-economic outcome 15.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their lands and waters	
• Land mass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s rights or interests (Target 15A)*	2024
• Sea mass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s rights or interests (Target 15B)*	2024
• Land and water ownership (15a)*	2024
• Indigenous Land Use Agreements (15d)**	2024
• Recognise homelands (15i)**	2022-23

Note: *Indicates where a new year of data has been published since the 2024 ADCR. **Indicates a new supporting indicator since the 2024 ADCR. Data considerations are provided in box 2.23.

Outcome 15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters

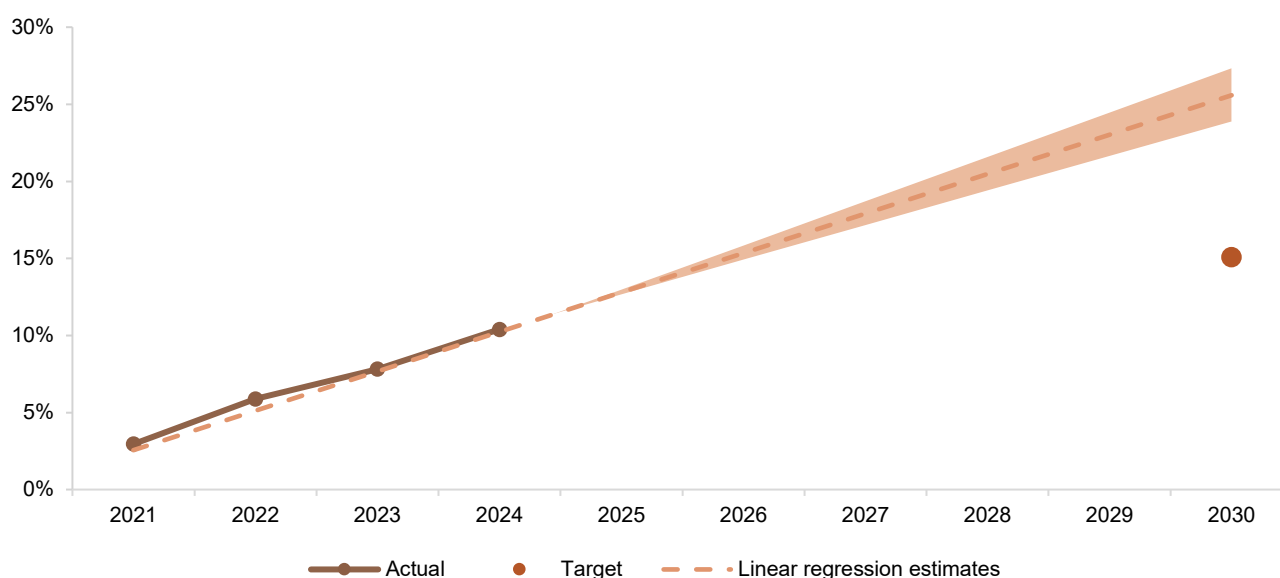
The target to increase land mass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s legal rights or interest is on track to be met by 2030

There was a 10.4% increase in the area of land subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s legal rights or interests between the baseline year of 2020 and 2024. This means that the target, which requires a 15% increase by 2030, remains on track to be met (figure 2.31).



Figure 2.31 – Change in land mass subject to rights or interests

Percentage change in total area subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's land rights or interests nationally against the baseline year (2020), 2021–2031 (Target 15A)



Source: (NNTT) (unpublished) Native Title Determinations Outcomes; Indigenous estate. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables CtG15A.1.









Most jurisdictions have seen increases in the total land area subject to rights or interests





Nationally, the progress towards the target has been driven by increases in total land area subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal rights or interests in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. While the trends for other states and territories are not as significant, progress is not worsening in any jurisdiction. South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales have shown moderate increases, while Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory have not reported any change.

The proportion of Australia's total land mass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights and interests increased from 50.9% to 56.1% between 2020 and 2024. At the jurisdictional level, Western Australia had the largest increase in land area covered by rights or interests as a proportion of total state land mass, from 65.7% of land mass in 2020 to 74.9% of land mass in 2024 (9.2 percentage points). Over the same period, Queensland and the Northern Territory saw about equal increases in the total proportion of land mass covered (5.2 percentage points and 5.1 percentage points, respectively). The proportion of total land mass covered increased by 1.2 percentage points in South Australia and 0.6 percentage points in Victoria over the 2020–2024 period. The 261 km² increase in land area subject to rights or interests in New South Wales amounted to less than 0.1% of the total size of the state.



State and territory assessment of progress (2020 to 2024)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
15A								
Confidence level	High	High	High	High	High	Low	Low	High

Legend	 Improvement	 Worsening	 No change	 No assessment
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Note: These assessments of progress are provided with a 'High' or 'Low' level of confidence. An assessment reported with a High level of confidence is considered to be more reliable than one reported with a Low level of confidence. Please see the Glossary in this report or 'How to interpret the data' page on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.

Progress is being made towards the target in all jurisdictions except Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, which have shown no change in land subject to legal rights and interests since the baseline year.

The target of a 15% increase in sea area covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests is on track to be met by 2030

As at June 2024, 113,517 km² of sea Country was subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights or interests, already above the 2030 target of 103,790 km² of sea Country. Therefore, the target of a 15% increase in sea area covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests is on track to be met.⁴⁷ While progress from the baseline year (2020) was initially slow, there was a significant increase in total sea Country subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and interests across all jurisdictions combined from 2022 to 2023 (22,350 km²). Then, between 2023 and 2024, there was a much smaller increase for jurisdictions combined (56 km²). Only two jurisdictions – Victoria and Queensland – reported an increase between 2023 and 2024.

National progress on sea Country has mostly been driven by three jurisdictions

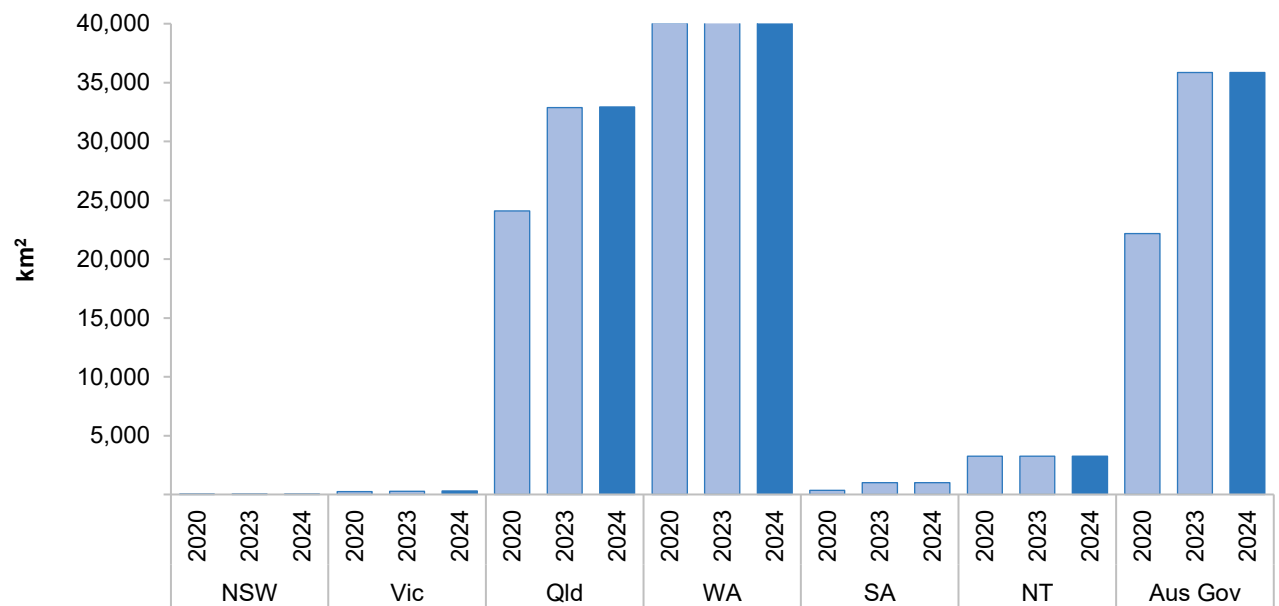
Nationally, the Australian and Queensland Governments have driven the increase in sea area subject to legal rights or interests (figure 2.32). South Australia reported a high percentage increase (172.4%), but its overall contribution to the national change was relatively modest (643 km² additional sea area covered by legal rights and interests since the baseline year). Of the remaining jurisdictions, New South Wales and Tasmania reported no improvements, and the Northern Territory reported only a 1 km² increase since 2020. While Western Australia's increase from 2020 to 2024 was modest, it has the highest proportion of total sea area subject to legal rights or interests compared to all other jurisdictions (34.4% of total sea area).

⁴⁷ While the assessment for the sea Country target is provided with a low level of confidence due to technical reasons (based on the assessment methodology), it is recognised that sea Country native title determinations already exceed the specified target for 2030 (and once a determination has been made, it is unlikely to be changed).



Figure 2.32 – Area of sea Country subject to legal rights or interests^{a,b}

Sea area subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal rights or interests as at 30 June, by jurisdiction and year, comparing recent years to the baseline (2020) (Target 15B)












a. Legal rights and interests in sea Country are not applicable to The Australian Capital Territory. Tasmania reported zero km² of sea Country subject to rights and interests for every year since the baseline (2020). Therefore, both jurisdictions have not been included. **b.** Australian Government (Aus Gov) jurisdiction sea area is distinct from the states and territories – it extends from the three nautical mile limit out to the Exclusive Economic Zone surrounding the mainland states and territories.

Source: NTTT (unpublished) Native Title Determinations Outcomes; Indigenous Estate. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG15B.1.



State and territory assessment of progress (2020 to 2024)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aus Gov
15B									
Confidence level	Low	High	High	Low	High	Low	..	Low	High

Legend	 Improvement	 Worsening	 No change	 No assessment
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Note: These assessments of progress are provided with a 'High' or 'Low' level of confidence. An assessment reported with a High level of confidence is considered to be more reliable than one reported with a Low level of confidence. Please see the Glossary in this report or 'How to interpret the data' page on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.

Progress toward the target is being made across all jurisdictions except Tasmania and New South Wales, which have shown no increase in area of sea Country subject to legal rights and interests since the baseline year.

Building a fuller picture of Country

Three supporting indicators provide further insights into the strong progress being achieved in this outcome area. Two supporting indicators present information on the different ways land is controlled and used. Indicator 15a reports on land owned or controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through exclusive rights, while Indicator 15d shows the number and types of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) in place. The third indicator, indicator 15i, helps to paint a picture of connection to Country by reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who recognise, live on and visit their homelands.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ For more detailed information on available supporting indicator data, refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.



Box 2.23 – Data considerations: types of legal rights and interests in land and waters

There are many types of legal rights and interests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can have in land and waters, each with their own unique characteristics and history. Definitions for the predominant types of legal rights and interests are provided below to enhance understanding of the data in this section.

Native title

Native title refers to the rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in land and waters based on their continued connections to an area stemming from traditional law and custom that are recognised by Australian law. Native title can be applied for and determined in court through mediation or litigation under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). Successful native title determinations can grant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people exclusive rights of possession over an area, or non-exclusive rights that exist alongside non-Indigenous property rights and allow traditional owners to undertake certain activities in the area.

Indigenous owned and controlled land

Land owned and controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people refers to areas of land exclusively owned by registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations or legally owned by governments and held exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use. This includes the following tenure types that grant exclusive rights over land: freehold, leasehold, crown, license, and Aboriginal Deed of Grant in Trust. It does not include land held by individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or any rights or interests granted by native title.

Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA)

ILUAs are voluntary agreements about the use and management of land and/or waters made between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander native title holders and other parties. An ILUA can be about any native title matter, including land management, future development, mining, cultural heritage or compensation for loss or impairment of native title. The PC CtG dashboard and ADCR report on two types of ILUAs: area agreements, which are made when there is no registered native title prescribed body corporate (PBC); and body corporate agreements, which are made when there is one or more registered native title PBC for the area.

Further specifications for the data in this section can be found on the PC CtG dashboard.

Source: NNTT (2024).

The amount of land owned or controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remained the same

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can hold a variety of legal rights over land and waters, including native title rights that may be either exclusive or non-exclusive, as well as exclusive rights through other forms such as freehold tenure. The amount of land owned and controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through exclusive rights outside of native title has remained around the same over the last four years.



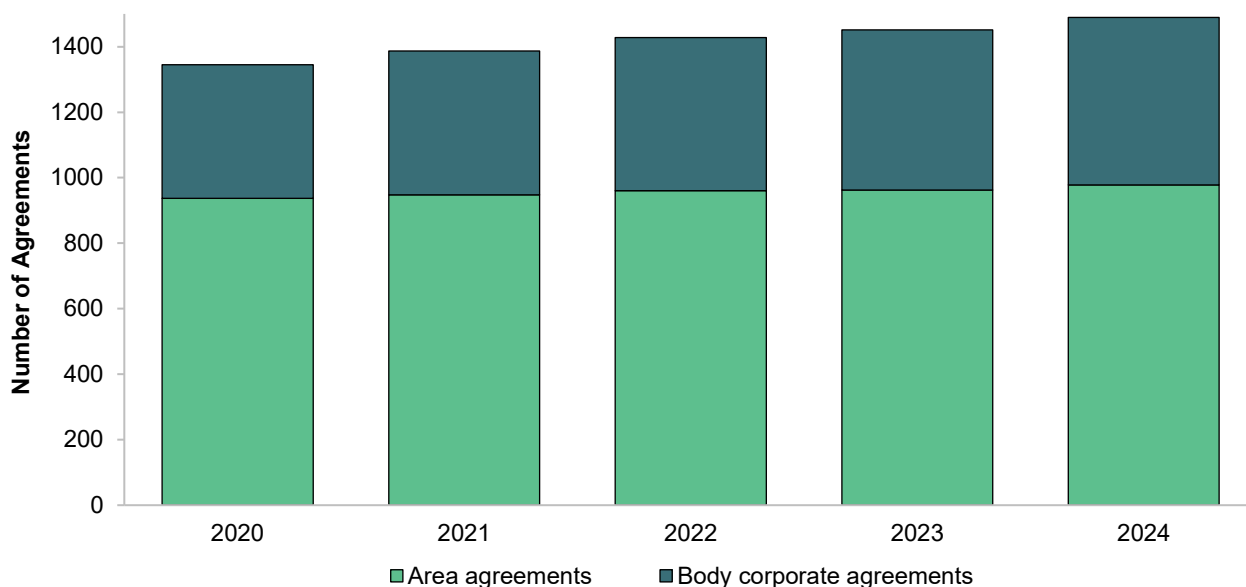
Nationally in 2024, 1,238,992 km² of land was owned or controlled by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation or owned by governments and held exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use, constituting 16.1% of the total land mass of Australia. This had changed very little since the baseline year (2020), with only a 0.1% increase in land area owned and controlled under non-native title exclusive rights. At the jurisdictional level, the Northern Territory had the largest amount of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled or owned land at 605,151 km², or 44.9% of all land in this jurisdiction.

There were more ILUAs in place

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander native title holders can sign an ILUA with other parties to decide how and for what purposes their lands and waters can be used and managed. Since 2020, the number of ILUAs increased by 10.8% to 1,490 agreements in 2024. Most of this growth was driven by a 25.5% increase in body corporate agreements, from 408 in 2020 to 512 in 2024, compared to an increase of just 4.4% in the number of area agreements. These trends have changed the composition of total ILUAs, with body corporate agreements constituting more than one third (34.4%) of all agreements in 2024 – 4.0 percentage points more than in 2020 (figure 2.33).

Figure 2.33 – Indigenous Land Use Agreements, by type of agreement

Number of Indigenous Land Use Agreements nationally, 2020 to 2024 (Indicator 15d)



Source: NNTT (unpublished) Register of Indigenous Land Use Agreements. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE15d.1.

From 2020 to 2024, the total land area covered by ILUAs of any type increased by 7.2% to 2,780,701 km², and total sea area covered increased 28.2% to 51,980 km². This means that ILUAs covered 36.2% of all land area in Australia in 2024, up 2.4 percentage points from 2020. South Australia had the highest coverage of any jurisdiction, with 60.7% of the land in that state falling under an ILUA in 2024.

Less people live on homelands but more visit

For some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, having knowledge of and a physical presence on their homelands or traditional Country can help maintain and strengthen their connection to their lands

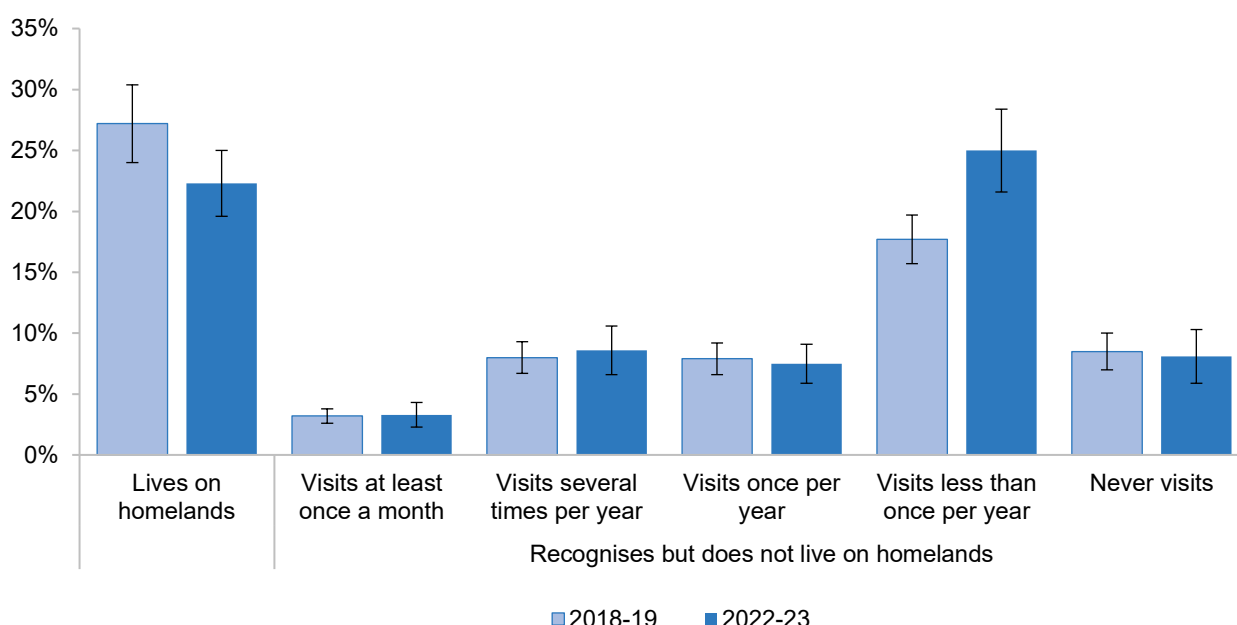


and waters. New indicator, Indicator 15i, shows that although more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people recognise and visit their homelands, less people live there. In 2022-23, 77.2% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people recognised their homelands or traditional Country, which is 2.8 percentage points more than the baseline year (2018-19).

From 2018-19 to 2022-23, there was a 4.9 percentage point decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who lived on their homelands to 22.3%, although the proportion of people who visited their homelands but did not live there grew by 7.7 percentage points to 55%. Most of this increase came from people who did not visit their homelands regularly – the proportion of people who visited less than once a year increased 7.1 percentage points to 25%, while the proportion who visited at least once a month remained around the same at just 3.3% (figure 2.34).

Figure 2.34 – Proportion of people who live on or visit homelands^a

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live on homelands, or recognise but do not live on homelands, by how often they visit, 2018-19 and 2022-23 (Indicator 15i)



a. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data tables SE15i.1-2.

Summary: Country

There is clear progress on outcomes for Country.

The targets for increasing the land mass and sea areas subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights and interests are on track to be met.



The proportion of land mass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests is increasing and the target is on track to be met
(Target 15A).

The amount of land owned or controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remains the same (Indicator 15a).

There are more Indigenous Land Use Agreements in place (Indicator 15d).

Less people live on homelands but more visit (Indicator 15i).



The proportion of sea areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights or interests is increasing and the target is on track to be met
(Target 15B).

Legend					
	On track	Improvement, but not on track	Worsening	No change	No assessment



2.8 Justice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been governed by their own rich and complex systems of Lore and Law for tens of thousands of years. These systems have been deeply woven into the fabric of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, guiding all aspects of community life including decision-making processes, mechanisms of social order and the moral and ethical codes of behaviour that dictate daily interactions and responsibilities (Dodson 1995). Colonisation did not recognise established systems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lore and Law. The colonial legal framework displaced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance structures and contributed to dispossession and the forced removal of children from their families, causing significant harm (Walker et al. 2023).

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people grow up in loving and supportive homes and continue to show resilience, developing and maintaining strong connections to their family, community and culture (Hall et al. 2020). However, due to factors including systemic bias and racism, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in the out-of-home care and criminal justice systems (Barber et al. 2016; McFarlane 2018).

The over-representation reflects a justice and legal system that fails to understand and value culture, Lore and Law. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities pursue justice and advocacy, including continuing to practice Lore and Law and ensuring wellbeing is supported through community-led initiatives (Dudgeon et al. 2014). The practice of Lore and Law remain protective factors but there are still many risk factors that can contribute to exposure to the justice system.

Engagement with the child protection system is a risk factor for exposure to the juvenile justice system and adult incarceration (ALRC 2017b). Evidence shows that children in residential out-of-home care are criminalised more frequently for behaviour that, within a family setting, would go unreported (Yoorrook Justice Commission 2023). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are also being criminalised for minor offences, or 'crimes of necessity'.

Risk factors for entering the criminal justice system include intergenerational trauma (AHRC 2020; ALRC 2017b), adverse childhood experiences (ALRC 2017b; Malvaso et al. 2022) and neurodevelopmental impairment (Bower et al. 2018). Further, over-policing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, heightened arrests for low-level offending (ALRC 2017a) as well as increased presence of police, racial profiling (Cunneen 2020; O'Brien 2021) and mandatory sentencing laws (ALRC 2017a) all contribute to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system. Challenges like accessing secure and adequate housing can mean Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on remand are exposed to longer periods of incarceration and further harm (ALRC 2017b).

Factors that protect against the incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people include access to culturally safe resources, community and health services and improved outcomes in socio-economic areas such as education and employment (McCausland and Baldry 2023). The provision of community-led and culturally appropriate programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people can also lead to increased participation and completion rates of youth diversionary programs, which may help address the cycle of incarceration (Cunneen et al. 2021).



Box 2.24 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available in 2025 for socio-economic outcomes 10 and 11.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system	
• Adult imprisonment rate (Target 10)*#^	2024
• People charged by police (10a)*#	2023-24
• Prisoner legal status (10d)**	2024
• Prisoner health (10g)	2022
Outcome 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system	
• Young people in detention (Target 11)*#^	2023-24
• Un-sentenced detention (11a)**	2023-24
• Alleged young offenders (10–17 years) involved in police proceedings (11c)*#	2023-24
• Young people first coming into youth justice system aged 10-13 (11h)*	2023-24

Note: *Indicates where a new year of data has been published since the 2024 ADCR. **Indicates a new supporting indicator since the 2024 ADCR. #Indicates revised historical data due to updates in population estimates and projections. ^Revised target due to updates in population estimates and projections.

Outcome 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are being incarcerated at an increased rate and the target of a 15% reduction is not on track to be met by 2031

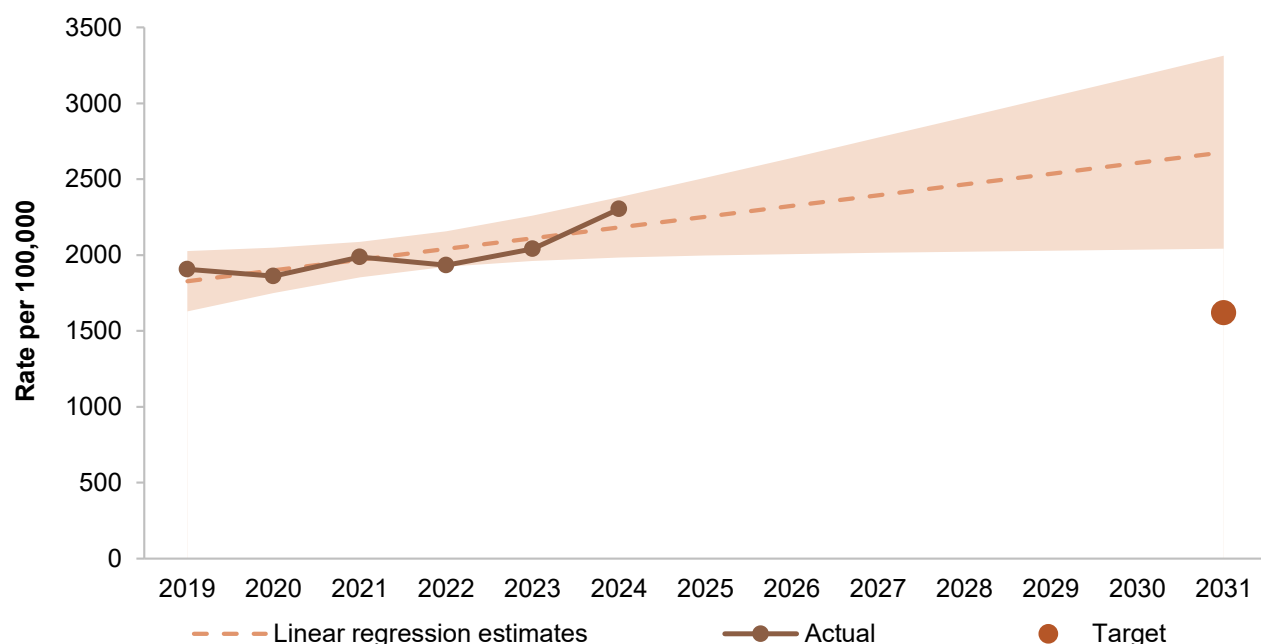
Nationally, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults incarcerated is increasing and the target of a 15% reduction by 2031 is not on track to be met. As of 30 June 2024, the age-standardised rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners was 2,304.4 per 100,000 adults.⁴⁹ This is an increase from the previous year (2,041.5 per 100,000 adults) and almost 400 more prisoners per 100,000 adults than the baseline year (1,906.1 per 100,000 adults in 2019) (figure 2.35).

⁴⁹ In 2024, the age-standardised rate of imprisonment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults was 15.6 times higher than for non-Indigenous adults, compared to 11.0 times higher in 2019.



Figure 2.35 – National age-standardised imprisonment rates^{a,b,c}

Age-standardised imprisonment rate per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years or over at 30 June, 2019 to 2031 (Target 10)



a. In Queensland, prior to 2018, 'adult' referred to people aged 17 years or over. From February 2018 onwards, people aged 17 years are being transitioned from adult correctional facilities into the Queensland juvenile justice system over a two-year period. In 2019, there were no people aged 17 years in Queensland adult correctional facilities. **b.** The shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals for the linear regression estimates. **c.** As the updated population has increased over the entire time series, assessments of changes over time are not substantially affected. There have been no changes to the national assessments of progress (on track/not on track) as a result of the updated populations. See section 1 'Data landscape' for more information on population changes.

Source: Derived from ABS Prisoners in Australia. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG10A.1.

Imprisonment rates have increased across most jurisdictions

The rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people imprisoned per 100,000 adults have increased across most jurisdictions since the baseline year (2019). From 2019 to 2024, the imprisonment rate in Victoria decreased by 383.2 per 100,000 adults and Victoria was also the only state to experience a decrease in the rate of imprisonment between 2023 and 2024. In 2024, the imprisonment rate in the Australian Capital Territory was not significantly different from the baseline year.

Of all jurisdictions with an increasing imprisonment rate and worsening progress, the Northern Territory had the largest increase. Between 2019 and 2024 the age-standardised rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people imprisoned in the Northern Territory increased by 812.4 per 100,000 adults.



State and territory assessment of progress (2019 to 2024)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
10	←	→	←	←	←	←	▢	←
Confidence level	Low	High	High	Low	High	Low	High	High

Legend	→	←	▢	••
	Improvement	Worsening	No change	No assessment

Note: These assessments of progress are provided with a 'High' or 'Low' level of confidence. An assessment reported with a High level of confidence is considered to be more reliable than one reported with a Low level of confidence. Please see the Glossary in this report or 'How to interpret the data' page on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.

Decreases in the rate of young adult imprisonment

Imprisonment rates went down between 2019 and 2024 for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults (aged 18–24 years) across most states and territories (except Queensland, and the Northern Territory for young males and Tasmania and the Northern Territory for young females). Between 2019 and 2024, the rate of young males per 100,000 people decreased by 415.4 to 3,323.6 and the rate of young females decreased by 75.1 to 319.9 per 100,000 people.

Increasing rates of imprisonment in older age groups

Adults aged 40–44 years have experienced the largest increase in imprisonment rates. Between 2019 and 2024, the rate for females aged 40–44 years increased by 328.7 to 827.4 per 100,000 and the rate for males of the same age increased by 1,873.2 to 6,751.8 per 100,000 – the largest increase for any sex or age group. In Victoria, imprisonment rates for adults of all ages (except males aged 55 years and over) have consistently declined between 2019 and 2024.

Overall, the rate of imprisonment has increased for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females, with male imprisonment rates being consistently higher than female rates across all years. In 2024, the male imprisonment rate was almost 9 times higher than the female imprisonment rate.

More context to adults' experiences in the criminal justice system

Reducing the incarceration rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is one of part of the broader goal of socio-economic outcome area 10, which is to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults across the criminal justice system. Supporting indicators help shed light on the factors that may contribute to this over-representation and help paint a more detailed picture of the experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults have with the criminal justice system.

There are three supporting indicators with available data in socio-economic outcome area 10. Indicator 10a records the rates at which police charge people and the type of proceedings they initiate, providing information about the interactions some people have with law enforcement. Indicator 10d reports on the legal status of people in prison custody, highlighting that people in prison can be



unsentenced and awaiting a court appearance. Additionally, Indicator 10g reports on some of the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering and leaving incarceration, but this has not been updated since the 2024 ADCR.⁵⁰

More people were charged by police (across most jurisdictions with data)

New South Wales, Queensland, and the Australian Capital Territory are the only jurisdictions that report enough data on the rates of people charged by police to construct a time series from 2018-19 to 2023-24, but data is also available for South Australia for 2022-23 and 2023-24.

In Queensland, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years or over charged by police has decreased from 8,607.7 per 100,000 adults in 2018-19 to 7,378.8 per 100,000 adults in 2023-24. In New South Wales over the same period, the rate increased by 2,531.1 to 7,864.6 per 100,000 adults. In the Australian Capital Territory, the rate was 4,590.3 per 100,000 adults in 2023-24, which is 86.0 per 100,000 higher than in 2018-19 but lower than the peak of 5,335.3 per 100,000 adults in 2021-22. In South Australia rates increased by 327.1 to 9,237.6 per 100,000 adults between 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Police can initiate different types of legal action when commencing proceedings against an alleged offender. Court actions include laying charges that must be answered in court while non-court actions include issuing infringements, counselling and formal or informal cautions and warnings. From 2018-19 to 2023-24, the proportion of proceedings by police against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults that were court actions decreased 1.7 and 2.0 percentage points to 97.0% and 95.0% in New South Wales and Queensland, respectively, and increased by 3.3 percentage points to 97.0% in the Australian Capital Territory. In South Australia, court actions made up 89.5% of police proceedings against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in 2023-24 – a 1.0 percentage point decrease from the previous year.

The proportion of unsentenced prisoners has increased

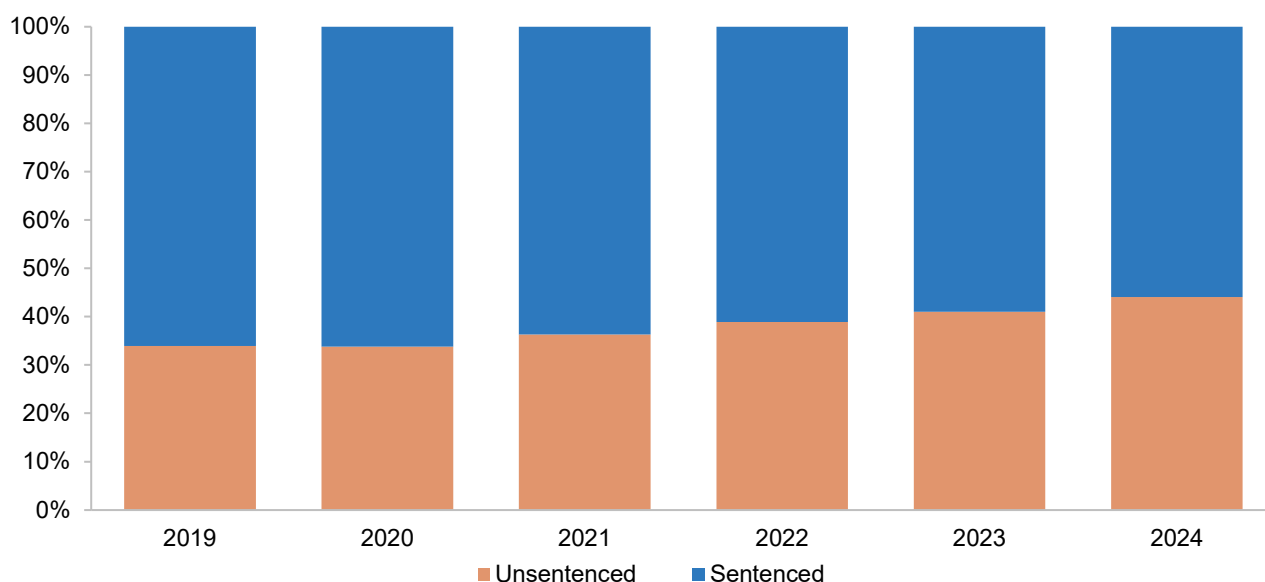
People in prison custody can have differing legal status, as some prisoners may be unsentenced and on remand awaiting their court appearance while others may have already been sentenced. New indicator, Indicator 10d, provides information on the legal status of people in prison. Nationally, the proportion of unsentenced prisoners has risen 10.1 percentage points since 2019, reaching 43.9% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison custody in 2024 (figure 2.36). Between 2019 and 2024 the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison custody who were unsentenced has increased in all states except Victoria.

⁵⁰ Refer to the PC CtG dashboard and page 65 of the 2024 ADCR for more information about Indicator 10g.



Figure 2.36 – Prisoner legal status^a

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in prison custody as at June 30, by legal status 2019 to 2024 (Indicator 10d)



a. In Queensland, prior to 2018, 'adult' referred to people aged 17 years or over. From February 2018 onwards, people aged 17 years are being transitioned from adult correctional facilities into the Queensland juvenile justice system over a two-year period. In 2019, there were no 17-year-olds in Queensland adult correctional facilities.

Source: ABS Prisoners in Australia. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE10d.1.

Between 2019 and 2024, there was a 17.0% decrease in the number of prisoners with sentences shorter than six months and a 15.7% increase in the number who had sentences between two and ten years. These changes drove a decrease of 3.4 percentage points in the proportion of sentenced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners with an aggregate sentence length of under two years.

Over the same period, the proportion of unsentenced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults on remand for less than six months decreased by 2.7 percentage points and the proportion on remand for one year or more increased by 2.7 percentage points. In 2024, the number of unsentenced people in prison was 68.9% higher than in 2019 and the number with more than a year on remand had more than doubled.

Outcome 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system

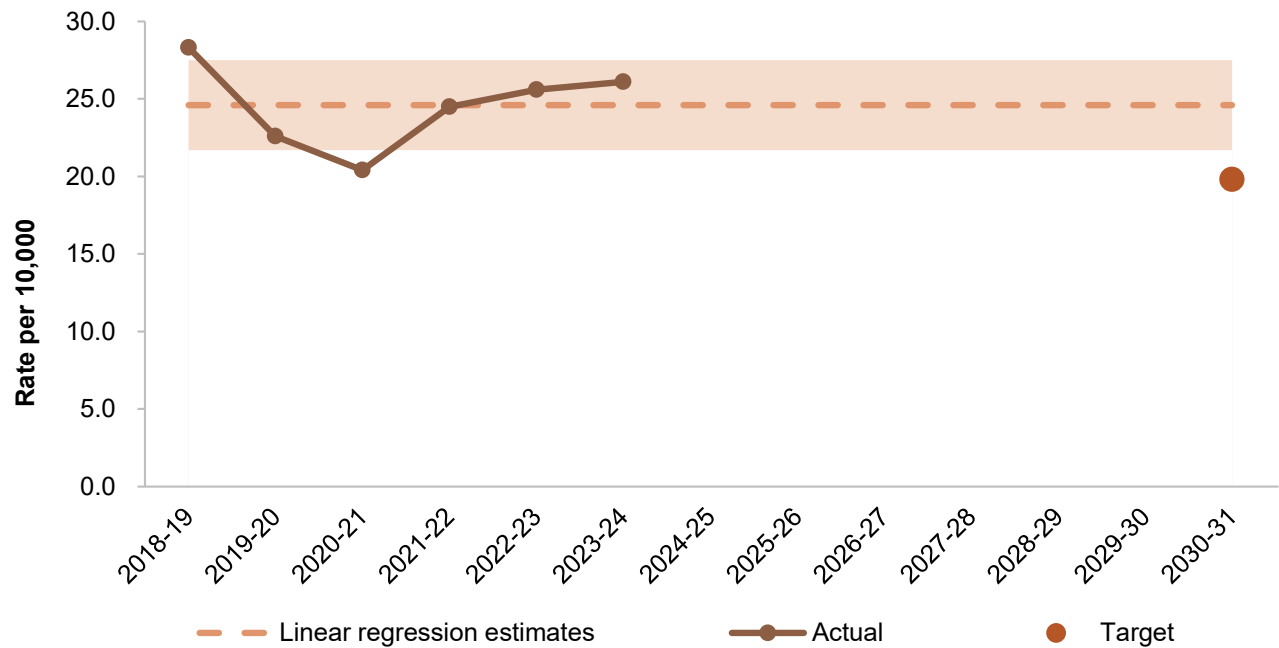
The target to reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention by at least 30% by 2031 is not on track to be met. Nationally, in 2023-24, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10–17 years in detention on an average day was 26.1 per 10,000 young people (figure 2.37). An initial decline in youth detention followed by recent increases means the



trend of the national target shows no change from the baseline (2018-19). The assessment of no change is provided with a low level of confidence, but no progress has been made towards the target.

Figure 2.37 – National youth detention rate^a

Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention on an average day per 10,000 young people aged 10–17 years, 2018-19 to 2030-31 (Target 11)



a. The shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals for the linear regression estimates.

Source: AIHW (unpublished) Youth Justice National Minimum Dataset; ABS Estimates and Projections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG11A.1.

The age of criminal responsibility is not consistent across the country

The minimum age of criminal responsibility varies across states and territories and is affected by changes to legislation (table 2.1).

Table 2.1 – Minimum age of criminal responsibility

State/Territory	Current minimum age of criminal responsibility
NSW, Qld, WA, SA, Tas, NT	10 years of age
Vic	12 years of age
ACT	14 years of age









In 2023, the Northern Territory passed legislation to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12 years of age, and then in 2024 lowered the minimum age back to 10 years of age. This year, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory raised the minimum age of criminal responsibility to





12 and 14 years of age, respectively. In 2022, in Queensland, a bill to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 years of age was rejected.

Progress to reduce the rate of young people in detention varies across states and territories

There are currently no state and territory targets for young people's representation in the criminal justice system. However, progress made in each state and territory contributes to the national outcome. The assessment below shows positive progress in outcomes for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia since 2018-19 (the baseline year). During the same time, the rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention in Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory have increased.

State and territory assessment of progress (2018-19 to 2023-24)

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
11								
Confidence level	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low	High

Legend	 Improvement	 Worsening	 No change	 No assessment
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Note: These assessments of progress are provided with a 'High' or 'Low' level of confidence. An assessment reported with a High level of confidence is considered to be more reliable than one reported with a Low level of confidence. Please see the Glossary in this report or 'How to interpret the data' page on the PC CtG dashboard for more information.

Young males are more likely than young females to be in detention

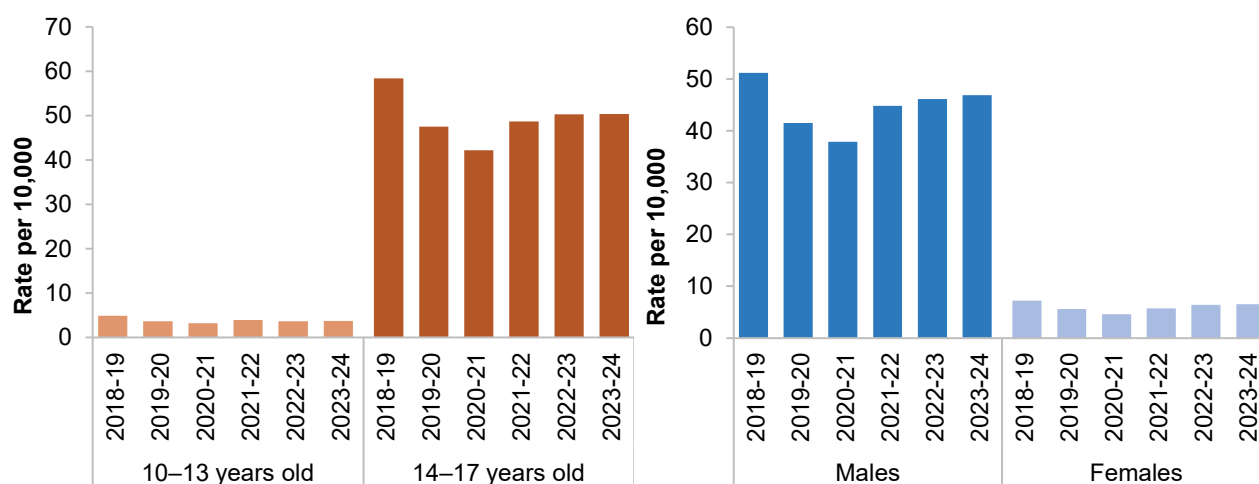
Nationally, in 2023-24, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young males were 7.2 times more likely than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young females to be in detention (figure 2.38).⁵¹ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 14–17 years were 13.5 times more likely to be in detention than those aged 10–13 years.

⁵¹ This report uses the terms 'male' and 'female' to refer to data disaggregated by sex. Data disaggregated by gender is not yet available for this indicator. For more information on gender and sex in the ADCR, refer to box 1.1.



Figure 2.38 – Youth detention rate by sex and age

Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention on an average day per 10,000 young people aged 10–17 years by sex and by age, 2018-19 to 2023-24 (Target 11)



Source: Derived from AIHW (unpublished) Youth Justice National Minimum Dataset. ABS Estimates and Projections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data tables CtG11A.2–3.

More context for young people's experiences of the criminal justice system

Reducing the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in youth detention is one part of the broader goal of socio-economic outcome 11, which is to address the over-representation of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the youth justice system. Supporting indicators help shed light on the factors that may contribute to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experiences with the youth justice system.

There are three supporting indicators in socio-economic outcome area 11 with data available. Indicator 11a reports on young people in detention who are not sentenced, presenting information about their legal status, while Indicator 11c provides details on how some young people interact with police by recording proceedings against them. Indicator 11h reports on the age that young people first enter the youth justice system, highlighting the risks that children and young teenagers can face.

The majority of young people in detention were unsentenced

The proportion of young people in detention who are unsentenced has varied over the years, but is consistently above 50.0% across most states and territories. Nationally, on an average night, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention who were unsentenced was 69.4% in 2018-19 and 76.8% in 2022-23.⁵² Queensland consistently has the highest numbers of unsentenced young people in detention (between 2018-19 and 2023-24 numbers ranged from 103 to 198). The proportion of unsentenced young people in detention in Queensland is also consistently high, ranging from 80.5% to 91.3% between 2018-19 and 2023-24.

⁵² Data for the June quarter across years is used as a comparator.



Young people are entering the youth justice system at older ages

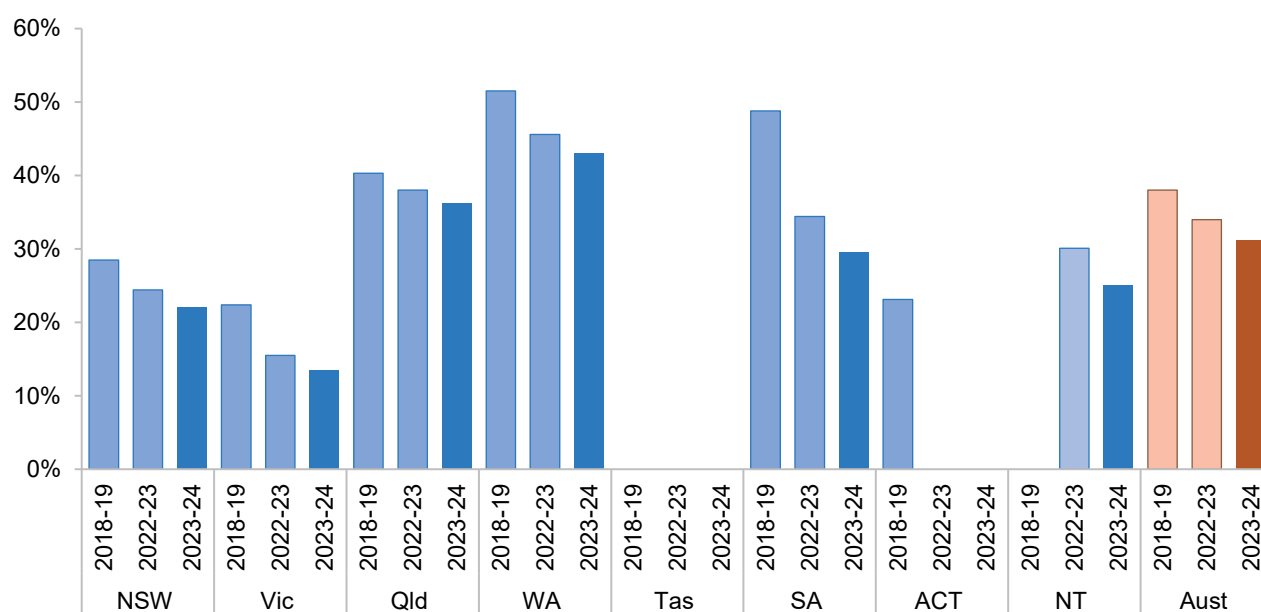
The proportion of entries into the justice system who are young people aged 10–13 years has decreased, which means the average age at entry has increased. This data has been updated since the last ADCR and historical data has changed because of the changes to population estimates (as explained in section 1.4). There are two main types of supervision in the youth justice system: community-based supervision and youth detention.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people under youth justice supervision that first entered supervision when aged 10–13 years has decreased each year, from the baseline rate of 38.0% in 2018-19 to 31.2% in 2023-24 (figure 2.39). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in youth detention has also decreased. In 2023-24, 34.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in youth detention entered aged 10–13 years, which is lower than the baseline of 39.2% in 2018-19 (figure 2.40).

Age at entry for youth justice supervision has increased in all jurisdictions with available data (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia). For reporting states, between 2018-19 and 2023-24, the proportion of young people aged 10–13 years entering youth justice supervision decreased between 4.1% and 19.3% (figure 2.39). For youth detention, the proportion of young people in detention in 2023-24 who were aged 10–13 years when they first entered youth detention decreased in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia. In Queensland the proportion of young people in detention in 2023-24 who were aged 10–13 years when they first entered youth detention has increased since 2018-19 and has decreased in the last year.

Figure 2.39 – Young people entering youth justice supervision, by jurisdiction^a

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (aged 10–17 years) under youth justice supervision who were aged 10–13 years at first supervision by jurisdiction, comparing recent years to the baseline (2018-19) (Indicator 11h)



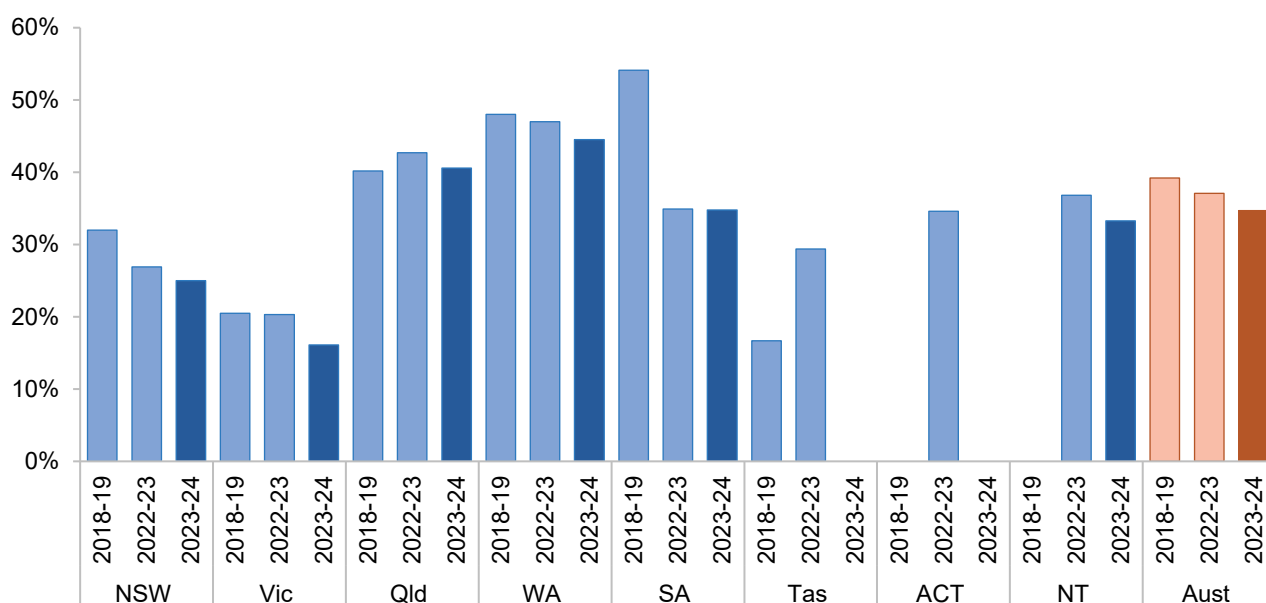
a. Data is not available for some jurisdictions in some years.

Source: Derived from AIHW Youth justice in Australia. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE11h.2.



Figure 2.40 – Young people entering youth detention by jurisdiction^a

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (aged 10–17 years) in detention who were aged 10–13 years at first entry into youth detention by jurisdiction, comparing recent years to the baseline (2018-19) (Indicator 11h)



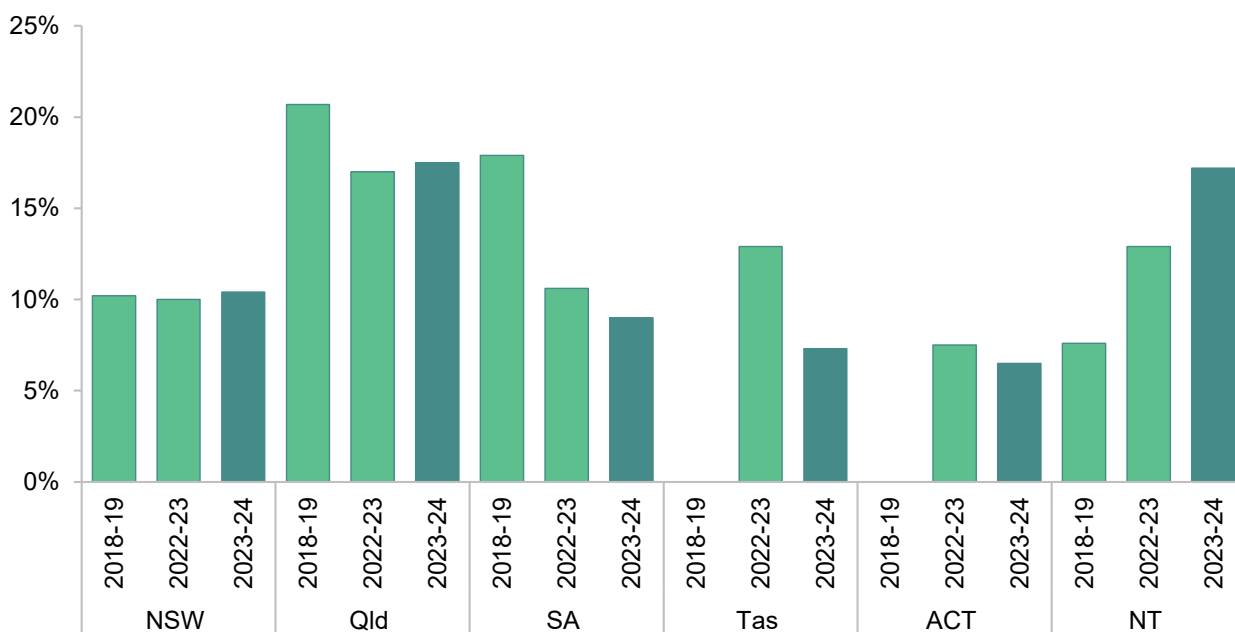
a. Data was not available for some jurisdictions in some years.

Source: Derived from AIHW Youth justice in Australia. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE11h.1

In 2023-24, across the six jurisdictions with available data, the proportion of young defendants at criminal court aged 10–13 years ranged between 6.5% in the Australian Capital Territory to 17.5% in Queensland (figure 2.41). Relative to the baseline year (2018-19), when four jurisdictions had data, the proportion of young defendants whose cases were finalised in the criminal courts increased in New South Wales and the Northern Territory, and declined in Queensland and South Australia.

Figure 2.41 – Young defendants at criminal courts, by jurisdiction

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defendants (aged 10–17 years) at criminal court who were aged 10–13 years by jurisdiction, 2018-19 to 2023-24 (Indicator 11h)



Source: Derived from ABS (unpublished) Criminal Courts Australia. Refer to the PC CtG dashboard data table SE11h.3.

Young people were proceeded against by police multiple times in most jurisdictions

Data on alleged young offenders involved in police proceedings is available for five jurisdictions – New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. This data has been updated since the last ADCR and historical data has changed because of the changes to population estimates (explained in section 1.4).

Between 2018-19 and 2023-24, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10–17 years proceeded against by police declined in Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory but increased in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The increasing rate of young people proceeded against by police in New South Wales was primarily among older young people as rates among those aged 10–13 years declined slightly. However, in the Australian Capital Territory, the increase spanned all age groups.

In 2023-24, across the five jurisdictions with available data, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people proceeded against by police, the proportion proceeded against once ranged from 31.5% to 55.5%. By comparison, between 15.5% and 24.7% were proceeded against twice, and between 28.8% and 42.1% were proceeded against three or more times.



Summary: Justice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and adults continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system.
No progress has been made toward meeting the targets set in 2020.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are being incarcerated at an increased rate and the target of a 15% reduction by 2031 is not on track to be met **(Target 10)**.

More people were charged by police (Indicator 10a).

The proportion of unsentenced prisoners has increased (Indicator 10d).

Among people discharged from prison, the rate of engagement in paid employment within two weeks of release has more than doubled (10g)



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system – there has been no progress made **(Target 11)**.

The majority of young people in detention were unsentenced (Indicator 11a).

Young people were proceeded against by police multiple times in most jurisdictions (Indicator 11c).

Young people were entering the youth justice system at older ages (Indicator 11h).

Legend



On track



Improvement,
but not on track



Worsening



No change



No
assessment



2.9 Digital inclusion

Access to information and digital inclusion are fundamental to the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They can unlock significant economic and social opportunities such as education and economic participation (NACCHO 2021). As technology increasingly facilitates improved access to health, education, government and utility services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities stand to benefit from improved opportunities (NACCHO 2021; Rennie et al. 2019).

Structural barriers such as lack of infrastructure, limited connectivity and socio-economic factors limit access to digital health, education and employment services and opportunities (FNDIAG 2023; NACCHO 2021). Issues such as affordability, education, unstable housing and economic participation can further widen the digital inclusion gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people (McCallum and Papandrea 2009; NACCHO 2021).

Addressing these challenges by improving digital literacy and ensuring reliable, affordable telecommunication services is essential for ensuring full participation in today's digital society. Enhanced access to information and strengthened digital literacy enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make informed decisions to improve their overall wellbeing (FNDIAG 2023).



Box 2.25 – What data will you find in this section?

This section provides a snapshot of the latest data available in 2025 for socio-economic outcome 17.

Outcome	Latest data
Outcome 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives	
• Access to information (Target 17)*	2022-23
• Levels of digital inclusion (17a)	2023
• Internet for government services (17e)*	2022-23
• Employed in media (17f)**	2021
• Community radio broadcasting license (17g)*	2024

Note: *Indicates where a new year of data has been published since the 2024 ADCR. **Indicates a new supporting indicator since the 2024 ADCR.

Outcome 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives

More people have access to the internet, but we cannot yet track whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have equal levels of digital inclusion by 2026

Tracking progress towards the target of achieving digital inclusion equality by 2026 is not possible due to a lack of comparable data. The 2022-23 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) revised target indicator, which estimates personal use of the internet and use in the last three months, is not directly comparable to the previous target indicator based on the 2014-15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), which instead collected data on personal use of the internet at home and use within the last 12 months. In addition to this, comparable non-Indigenous data on internet use does not exist.

In 2014-15, 325,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over accessed the internet in their home. Since then, access to the internet has increased, fuelled by the COVID-19 related lockdowns and because people increasingly access the internet using a mobile phone (ACMA 2022).

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia who access the internet is now measured without reference to the home. A greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 5–14 years had personally used the internet in the past three months than those aged 15 years or over. In 2022-23, 91.1% (196,700) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 5–14 years, and 88.3% (589,700) of those aged 15 years or over had personally used the internet in the past three months. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over (81.3%) used the internet daily.

State and territory assessment of progress

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
17	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●

Legend

→

Improvement

←

Worsening

▨

No change

●●

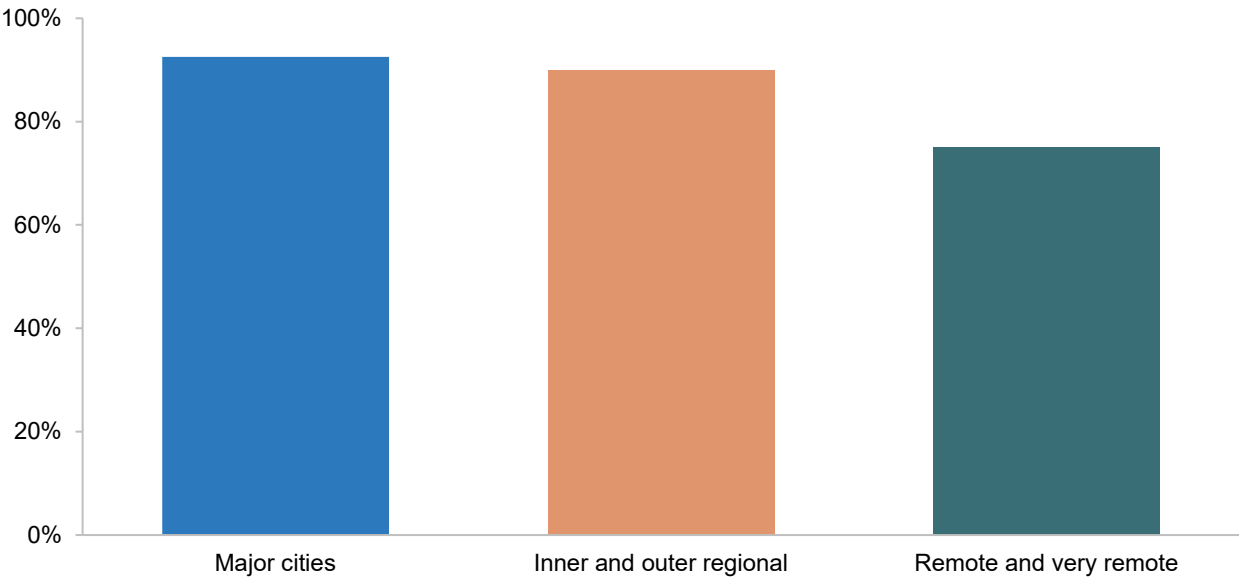
No assessment

Internet use varies across the population

In 2022-23, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in each state and territory aged 15 years or over who had not personally used the internet in the last three months varied from 6.2% in Victoria to 29.9% in the Northern Territory. People who live in remote and very remote areas (figure 2.42), those aged over 65 years, and people living with a profound/severe core activity limitation were less likely to have used the internet in the last three months.⁵³

Figure 2.42 – Internet usage, by remoteness area

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over who had personally used the internet in the past three months by remoteness area, 2022-23 (Target 17)



Source: ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table CtG17A.4.

⁵³ Refer to PC CtG dashboard data tables CtG17A.3 and CtG17A.6.



Building a fuller picture of digital inclusion⁵⁴

There are four supporting indicators with data available in outcome 17 that provide some insights into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to information and services.

Digital inclusion is about access, affordability and people's ability to use digital products. Indicator 17a is a driver indicator about the different levels of digital inclusion across Australia. Using the internet is one way to access information about government services. Indicator 17e is a driver indicator about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using the internet to access government services.

First nations media organisations are often based in local communities and employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, further strengthening those communities (FNMA 2021). Indicator 17f is an indicator about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in media and multimedia services. Community broadcasting services are required to promote a diverse range of broadcasting for the Australian public, develop and reflect Australian identity, character and cultural diversity, and provide local content (ACMA 2025). Indicator 17g provides contextual information about community broadcast licenses that have an Indigenous interest.

Digital inclusion gaps exist for remote and very remote areas

The Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) – Indicator 17a – is a relative measure of digital inclusion based on three dimensions (access, affordability and digital ability). While the ADII is used to measure digital inclusion across the entire Australian community, the latest survey includes data on a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country to map the digital gap. In 2023, the gap was greater between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people in remote and very remote areas, than the gap across all reported areas of Australia.⁵⁵ While there is no new data available at the time of this report, the Australian Government has committed to improving the national collection of digital inclusion data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society 2025).

Over half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use the internet to access government information or services

New data is now available for the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who personally use the internet to access government information or services. Nationally in 2022-23, 52.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over had used the internet to access government information or services in the past three months (Indicator 17e).

⁵⁴ For more detailed information on available indicator data, please refer to table A4 in the Appendix or the PC CtG dashboard.

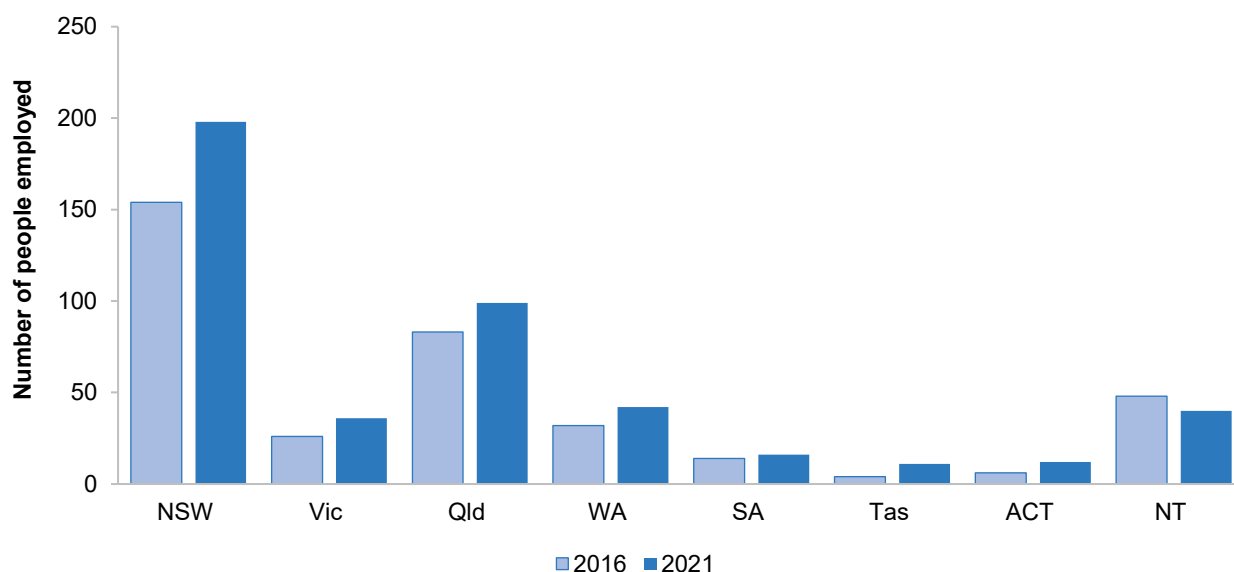
⁵⁵ A figure showing comparison of Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) by remoteness and Indigenous status – Indicator 17a – can be found on page 72 of the 2024 ADCR or on the PC CtG dashboard.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the media and community broadcast licences are growing

In 2021, 458 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over were employed in media or multimedia services compared to 364 in 2016 (Indicator 17f). Over 40% of those employed were in New South Wales (figure 2.43).

Figure 2.43 – Employment in the media

Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over employed in the media by jurisdiction, 2016 and 2021 (Indicator 17f)



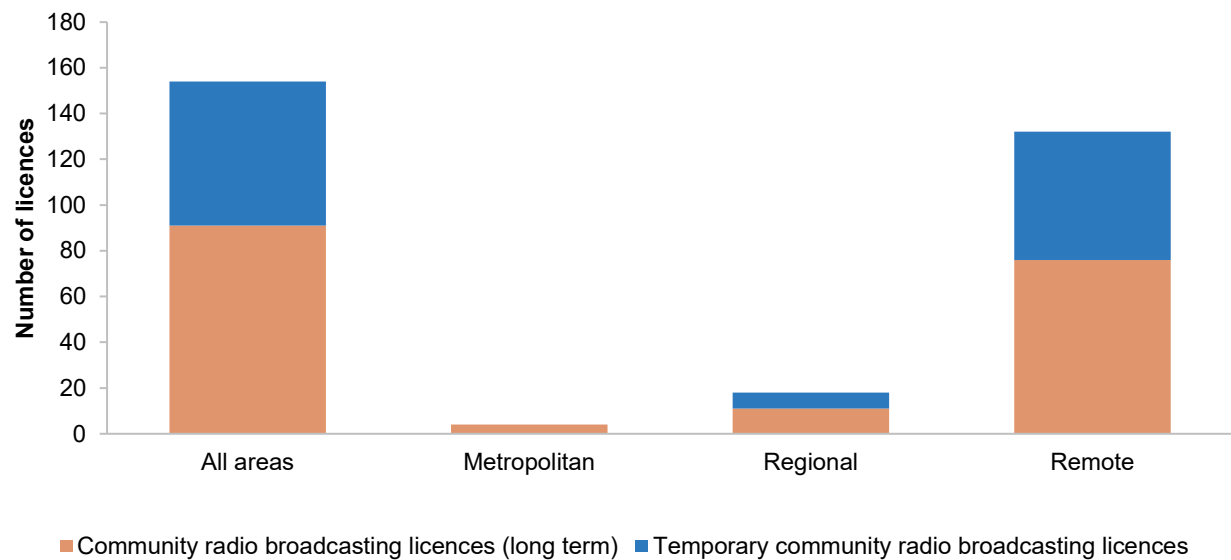
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE17f.1.

The latest data for community radio broadcasting licences with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander interest (Indicator 17g) shows that at 30 June 2024, there were 154 community radio broadcasting licences, 91 of which were long term and 63 were temporary community licences (figure 2.44). The majority of the licenses were in remote (85.7%) and regional (11.7%) areas (figure 2.44).



Figure 2.44 – Community broadcasting licences

Number of community broadcasting licences with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interest at 30 June 2024, by region (Indicator 17g)



Source: ACMA Community Radio Broadcasting Licences. Refer to PC CtG dashboard data table SE17g.1.

Summary: Digital inclusion

There is still no data to assess the progress of digital inclusion since the target was established in 2021.



There is no new data available to report on the progress for increased access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Target 17).

Digital inclusion gaps exist for remote and very remote areas (Indicator 17a).
Over half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use the internet to access government information or services (Indicator 17e).
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the media and community broadcast licences are growing (Indicators 17f and 17g).

Legend



On track



Improvement, but not on track



Worsening



No change



No assessment



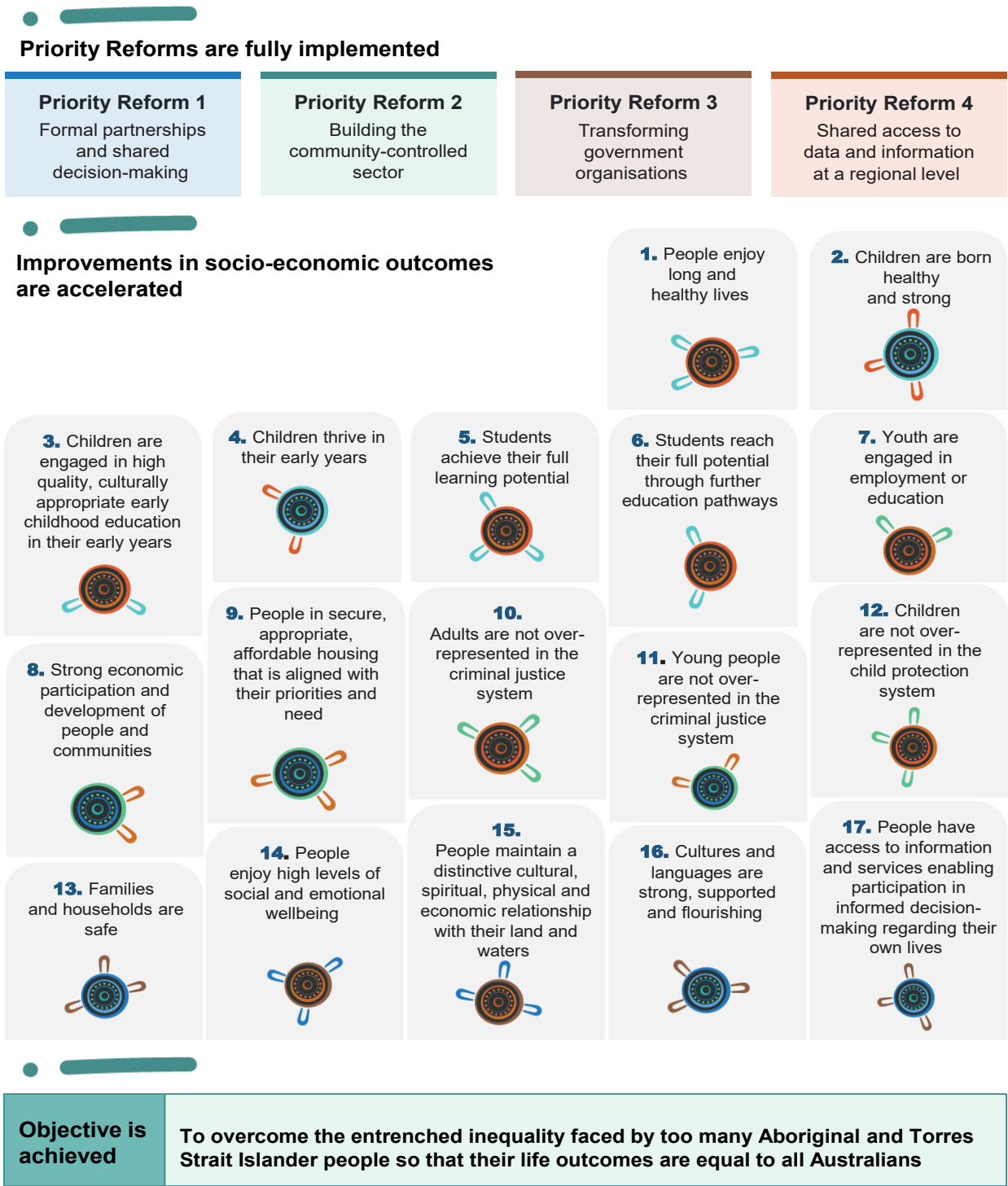
Attachments



Attachment 1 – Logic of the framework for measuring progress

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap aims to implement four Priority Reforms to change the way government systems and structures work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These reforms are expected to accelerate improvements in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Figure A1 outlines this logic.

Figure A1



Attachment 2 – Closing the Gap dashboard data collection summary (2025)

Table A1 provides a timeline of target data updates for each Annual Data Compilation Report (ADR) publication year, which spans from the first ADCR to the relevant outcome year. For each ADCR publication year, the table shows the latest available data year used (or expected to be used) for assessing each target's progress. Orange boxes show when updated assessments of progress were enabled in the ADCR by new available data and grey boxes indicate when this is expected.

Table A1 – Targets: updated data reported in ADCR and currently expected data (up to and including target years)

Targets	ADCR publication year														
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
1	2015–2017			2020–2022					2025–2027					2030–2032	
2	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	
3	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025									
4	2018	2021			2024			2027			2030			2033	
5	2016			2021					2026					2031	
6	2016			2021					2026					2031	
7	2016			2021					2026					2031	
8	2016			2021					2026					2031	
9A	2016			2021					2026					2031	



ADCR publication year															
Targets	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
9B															
10	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031			
11	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031			
12	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031			
13	2018-19														
14	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
15A	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
15B	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
16	2018-19						2026								
17	2014-15				2022-23										

Legend	Latest year of data when updated	Latest year of data expected to be reported
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Table A2 – Target indicator data summary

Outcome	Target Indicator	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest dashboard update	Years currently reported (from baseline)	Latest data on dashboard	Reference year for next data update
1	Life expectancy	ABS	CtG1A.1–3	<u>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Life Expectancy</u>	5-yearly	Mar-24	2005–07, 2010–12, 2015–17, 2020–22	2020–22	2025–27
2	The proportion of babies with a healthy birthweight	AIHW	CtG2A.1–3	<u>National Perinatal Data Collection</u>	Annual	Mar-25	2017 to 2022	2022	2023
3	The proportion of children in the state-specific YBFS age cohort who are enrolled in a preschool program	ABS	CtG3A.1–7	<u>Preschool Education</u>	Annual	Jul-25	2016 to 2024	2024 [#]	2025
4	The proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the AEDC	Department of Education	CtG4A.1–6	<u>Australian Early Development Census</u>	3-yearly	Jul-25	2018, 2021, 2024	2024	2027
5	The proportion of people aged 20 to 24 years who completed Year 12 or	ABS	CtG5A.1–6	<u>Census of Population and Housing</u>	5-yearly	Jun-23	2016, 2021	2021	2026



Outcome	Target Indicator	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest dashboard update	Years currently reported (from baseline)	Latest data on dashboard	Reference year for next data update
	equivalent, or attained a Certificate level III or above qualification								
6	The proportion of people aged 25 to 34 years who have completed qualifications at Certificate level III or above	ABS	CtG6A.1–6	Census of Population and Housing	5-yearly	Mar-23	2016, 2021	2021	2026
7	The proportion of youth aged 15 to 24 years who are fully engaged in employment, education or training	ABS	CtG7A.1–7	Census of Population and Housing	5-yearly	Jun-23	2016, 2021	2021	2026
8	The proportion of people aged 25 to 64 years who are employed	ABS	CtG8A.1–8	Census of Population and Housing	5-yearly	Mar-23	2016, 2021	2021	2026
9A	The proportion of people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing	ABS	CtG9A.1–8	Census of Population and Housing	5-yearly	Mar-23	2016, 2021	2021	2026



Outcome	Target Indicator	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest dashboard update	Years currently reported (from baseline)	Latest data on dashboard	Reference year for next data update
9B	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households receive equal or better essential services (Community Infrastructure)	Data does not yet exist	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	Age-standardised imprisonment rate	ABS	CtG10A.1-6	<u>Prisoners in Australia</u>	Annual	Mar-25	2019 to 2024	2024 [#]	2025
11	The rate of young people aged 10 to 17 years in detention	AIHW	CtG11A.1-4	<u>Youth Justice National Minimum Data Set (YJ NMDS)</u>	Annual	Mar-25	2018-19 to 2023-24	2023-24 [#]	2024-25
12	The rate of children aged 0 to 17 years in out-of-home care	State & Territory governments and AIHW	CtG12A.1-4	<u>Child Protection National Minimum Data Set (CP NMDS)</u>	Annual	Mar-25	2019 to 2024	2024 [#]	2025
13	Proportion of females aged 15 years or over who experienced domestic physical or threatened physical harm in the last 12 months	ABS	CtG13A.1-2	<u>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS)</u>	To be confirmed *	Jun-21	2018-19	2018-19	To be confirmed*



Outcome	Target Indicator	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest dashboard update	Years currently reported (from baseline)	Latest data on dashboard	Reference year for next data update
14	Suicide death rate	ABS	CtG14A.1–11	<u>Causes of Death</u>	Annual	Mar-25	2018 to 2023	2023 [#]	2024
15	Area of Australian land mass and sea waters that is subject to people's legal rights or interests	National Native Title Tribunal	CtG15A.1 and CtG15B.1	<u>Native Title Determinations Outcomes; Indigenous Estate</u>	Annual	Mar-25	A: 2020 to 2024 B: 2020 to 2024	2024	2025
16	The number and strength of languages being spoken	AIATSIS	CtG16A.1	<u>National Indigenous Languages Surveys (NILS)</u>	Periodic	Mar-24	2018-19	2018-19	To be confirmed
17	Proportion of people aged 15 years or over who have accessed the internet at home in the last 12 months	ABS	CtG17A.1–7	<u>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS)</u>	To be confirmed *	Mar-25	2022-23	2022-23	To be confirmed

Notes: *No survey is currently conducted (nor is one planned) to collect data for Target 13 and Target 17. # Revised population data included in this ADCR update.



Table A3 – Target disaggregation data summary

Outcome	Target Indicator	By sex	By age/age group	By remoteness area	By IRSD quintile ²	By disability status	By other
1	Life expectancy	CtG1A.1	..	CtG1A.3 (by sex)	CtG1A.4 (by sex)	..	..
2	The proportion of babies with a healthy birthweight	CtG2A.2	..	CtG2A.3	CtG2A.4	..	..
3	The proportion of children in the state-specific YBFS age cohort who are enrolled in a preschool program	CtG3A.2	..	CtG3A.3-4	CtG3A.5-6	CtG3A.7 (proportion of children enrolled)	..
4	The proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the AEDC	CtG3A.3	..	CtG3A.4	CtG3A.5	CtG3A.6 (proportion of students)	
5	The proportion of people aged 20-24 years who have attained a minimum of Year 12 or equivalent, or Certificate level III or above qualification	CtG5A.2	..	CtG5A.3	CtG5A.4	CtG5A.5	CtG5A.6: By attainment category
6	The proportion of people aged 25-34 years who have completed qualifications at Certificate level III or above	CtG6A.2	..	CtG6A.3	CtG6A.4	CtG6A.5	CtG6A.6: By highest educational attainment



Outcome	Target Indicator	By sex	By age/age group	By remoteness area	By IRSD quintile ²	By disability status	By other
7	The proportion of youth aged 15-24 years who are fully engaged in employment, education or training	CtG7A.2	CtG7A.3	CtG7A.4	CtG7A.5	CtG7A.6	CtG6A.7: By category of engagement
8	The proportion of people aged 25-64 years who are employed	CtG8A.2	CtG8A.3	CtG8A.4	CtG8A.5	CtG8A.6	CtG8A.7: By highest level of educational attainment
9A	The proportion of people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing	CtG9A.2	CtG9A.3	CtG9A.4	CtG9A.5	CtG9A.6	CtG9A.7: By extra bedrooms needed CtG9A.8: By tenure type
9B	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households receive equal or better essential services (Community Infrastructure)	..	..	..	..	..	..
10	Age-standardised imprisonment rate	CtG10A.3	CtG10A.4	..	..	..	CtG10A.5-6: By sex, by age group
11	The rate of young people aged 10-17 years in detention	CtG11A.2	CtG11A.3	..	..	..	CtG11A.4: By sex, by age group
12	The rate of children aged 0-17 years in out-of-home care	CtG12A.2	CtG12A.3	..	..	CtG12A.4 (Proportion in out-of-home care)	..
13	Proportion of females aged 15 years or over who experienced domestic	..	..	..	..	..	..



Outcome	Target Indicator	By sex	By age/age group	By remoteness area	By IRSD quintile ²	By disability status	By other
	physical or threatened physical harm in the last 12 months						
14	Suicide death rate	CtG14A.4 (total jurisdictions) CtG14A.5 (5-year aggregate)	CtG14A.7 (5-year aggregate)	CtG14A.8 (Australia, 5-year aggregate) CtG14A.9 (number, 5-year aggregate)	..	..	CtG14A.3: By state and territory (5-year aggregate) CtG14A.7: By sex, by age group (total jurisdictions, 5-year aggregate) CtG14A.10: By sex, by remoteness area (Australia, 5-year aggregate) CtG14A.11: By sex, by remoteness area (Number, Australia, 5-year aggregate)
15	Area of Australian land mass and sea waters that is subject to people's legal rights or interests	..	..	..	..	..	..
16	The number and strength of languages being spoken	..	..	..	..	..	..
17	Proportion of people aged 15 years or over who have accessed the internet at home in the last 12 months	CtG17A.2	CtG17A.3	CtG17A.4	CtG17A.5	CtG17A.6	..

1. All disaggregations available by state and territory, unless otherwise indicated. 2. IRSD = Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage.



Table A4 – Supporting indicator data summary

Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
1b	Leading causes of death	ABS	SE1b.1–3	Causes of Death	Annual	2019–2023 [#]	2014–2018, 2019–2023	Mar-25	2020–2024
1b	SE1b Denominator	ABS	SE1b.1–3	Population estimates and projections	Annual	2019–2023 [#]	2014–2018, 2019–2023	Mar-25	2020–2024
1c	Potentially avoidable mortality	ABS	SE1c.1	Causes of Death	Annual	2019–2023 [#]	2014–2018, 2019–2023	Jul-25	2020–2024
1d	Health risk factors	ABS	SE1d.1–9	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)	3–6 yearly	2022-23	2004-5, 2008, 2012-13, 2014-15, 2018-19, 2022-23	Jul-25	To be confirmed
1e	Rates of accessing/utilisation of health services	MBS Analytics section, Department of Health / AIHW	SE1e.1–3	MBS	Annual	2022-23 [#]	2016-17 to 2022-23	Mar-25	2023-24
1e	SE1e Denominator	ABS	SE1e.1–3	Population estimates and projections	Annual	2022-23 [#]	2016-17 to 2022-23	Mar-25	2023-24



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
2a	Smoking during pregnancy	AIHW	SE2a.1–3	National Perinatal Data Collection (NPDC)	Annual	2022	2017 to 2022	Mar-25	2023
2d	Use of antenatal care	AIHW	SE2d.1–4	NPDC	Annual	2022	2017 to 2022	Mar-25	2023
3a	Attendance in early childhood education	ABS	SE3a.1	Preschool Education	Annual	2024	2016 to 2024	Jul-25	2025
3b	Early childhood education and care service providers	SNAICC	SE3b.1	Register of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused integrated early years services	Annual	2024	2016 to 2024	Jul-25	2025
4d	AEDC Multiple Strengths Indicator	Department of Education	SE4d.1	AEDC	3 yearly	2024	2018, 2021, 2024	Jul-25	2027
5a	School attendance	ACARA	SE5a.1–3	National Student Attendance Data Collection	Annual	2024	2016 to 2024	Jul-25	2025
5c	NAPLAN achievement	ACARA	SE5c.1–4	National Assessment Program – Literacy and numeracy	Annual	2024	2023-24	Nov-24	2025



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
6a	Higher education commencement, attrition, and completion rates	Department of Education	SE6a.1–3	Higher Education Statistics Collection	Annual	M1: 2023 M2: 2022 M3: 2023	M1: 2008 to 2023 M2: 2016 to 2022 M3: 2016 to 2023	Mar-25	M1: 2024 M2: 2023 M3: 2024
6b	Higher education application, offers and acceptance rates (by gender, SES and ATAR levels)	Department of Education	SE6b.1–3	Higher Education Statistics Collection	Annual	2021	M1: 2008 to 2023 M2: 2016 to 2022 M3: 2016 to 2023	Nov-24	2022
6c	VET commencements, attrition and completion rates	NCVER	SE6c.1–2	Total VET students and courses	Annual	M1: 2023 M2: 2021	M1: 2016 to 2023 M2: 2016 to 2021	Mar-25	M1: 2024 M2: 2022
6g	VET grad outcomes	NCVER	SE6g.1–2	National Student Outcomes Survey	Annual	2024	2016 to 2024	Jul-25	2025
7a	Proportion of youth Not Engaged in Employment,	ABS	SE7a.1–4	Census	5 yearly	M1: 2021 M2: 2021 M3: 2021 M4: 2021	M1: 2016, 2021 M2: 2021 M3: 2016,	Mar-23	2026



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
	Education or Training (NEET)						2021 M4: 2016, 2021		
8c	Caring responsibilities	ABS	SE8c.1–3	Census	5 yearly	2021	2016, 2021	Jul-23	2026
8d	Proportion of people aged 25-64 years who are employed, by occupation.	ABS	SE8d.1	Census	5 yearly	2021	2016, 2021	Mar-23	2026
9e	Structural problems including functional health hardware	ABS	SE9e.1–3	NATSIHS	Periodic and 3–6 yearly	2022-23	2018-19, 2022-23	Jul-25	To be confirmed
9g	Social housing	M1: ABS M2: AIHW	SE9g.1–4	M1: Census M2: National Housing Assistance Data Repository	M1: 5 yearly M2: Annual	M1: 2021 M2: 2024	M1: 2016, 2021 M2: 2016 to 2024	M1: Jun-22 M2: Jul-25	M1: 2026 M2: 2025
10a	People charged by police	ABS	SE10A.1–2	Recorded Crime – Offenders	Annual	2023-24 [#]	2018-19 to 2023--24	Jul-25	2024-25



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
10d	Prisoner legal status	ABS	SE10d.1-3	Prisoner characteristics	Annual	2024	2019 to 2024	Jul-25	2025
10g	Prisoner health	AIHW	SE10g.1-5	The Health of People in Australia's prisons	Periodic (2-3 yearly)	2022	2018, 2022	Jul-24	To be confirmed
11a	Unsentenced detention	AIHW	SE11a.1	Youth detention population in Australia 2024	Annual	June quarter 2023	June quarter 2019 to June quarter 2023	Jul-25	June quarter 2025
11c	Proportion of alleged young offenders (10-17 years) involved in police proceedings	ABS	SE11c.1-3	Recorded crime – offenders	Annual	2023-24	2018-19 to 2023-24	Jul-25	2024-25
11h	Proportion of young people (10-13) first coming into youth justice system	AIHW	SE11h.1-4	Youth justice in Australia	Annual	2023-24	2018-19 to 2023-24	Jul-25	2024-25
12b	Proportion of children in out-of-home care (0 to 17 years) that are	AIHW	SE12b.1	CP NMDS	Annual	2024	2019-24	Mar-25	2025



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander								
12e	Application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP)	Jurisdictions	SE12e.1	State and territory governments	Annual	2024	2019-24	Mar-25	2025
12g	Children with a cultural care plan	AIHW	SE12g.1	CP NMDS	Annual	2023	2019 to 2023	Jul-25	2024
12m	Rates of substantiation of a notification by type of abuse	Jurisdictions & AIHW	SE12m.1	State and territory governments; & CP NMDS	Annual	2023-24 [#]	2018-19 to 2023-24	Jul-25	2024-25
12m	SE12m Denominator	ABS	SE12m.1	Population estimates and projections	Annual	2023-24 [#]	2018-19 to 2023-24	Jul-25	2024-25
13c	Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering out-of-home care and receiving protection orders,	To be confirmed	N/A	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	N/A	N/A	Jun-22	To be confirmed



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
	where family violence is indicated								
13d	Women reporting family violence is common in their communities	ANROWS	SE13d.1-2	The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)	Periodic	2021	2021	Mar-25	To be confirmed
13h	Rates of hospitalisation for family violence	AIHW	SE13h.1-3	National Morbidity Database	Annual	2022-23 [#]	2018-19 to 2022-23	Mar-25	2023-24
13h	SE13h Denominator	ABS	SE13h.1-3	Population estimates and projections	Annual	2022-23 [#]	2018-19 to 2022-23	Mar-25	2023-24
13p	Assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services for reasons of family violence	AIHW	SE13p. 1	Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC)	Annual	2023-24	2018-12 to 2023-24	Jul-25	2024-25
13q	Specialist Homelessness Services for family violence with children	AIHW	SE13q.1-2	SHSC	Annual	2023-24	2018-12 to 2023-24	Jul-25	2024-25



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
14a	Hospitalisations for self harm	AIHW	SE14a.1	National Hospital Morbidity Database	Annual	2022-23	2018-19 to 2022-23	Jul-25	2023-24
14d	Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting experiencing psychological distress	ABS	SE14d.1	NATSIHS	Periodic	2022-23	2018-19 to 2022-23	Jul-25	To be confirmed
14e	Barriers accessing health services	ABS	SE14e.1-3	NATSIHS	Periodic	2022-23	2018-19 to 2022-23	Jul-25	To be confirmed
14g	Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing racial prejudice	Reconciliation Australia	SE14g.1	Australian Reconciliation Barometer	Biannual	2022	2018, 2020, 2022	Jul-24	2024
15a	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's owned land and water titles	Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC)	SE15a.1	ILSC Indigenous held land dataset	Annual	2024	2020-24	Mar-25	2025



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
15d	Indigenous Land Use Agreements	National Native Title Tribunal	SE15d.1–2	Register of Indigenous Land Use Agreement	Annual	2024	2020 to 2024	Nov-24	2025
15i	Recognise homelands	ABS	SE15i.1–2	NATSIHS	Periodic	2022-23	2018-19, 2022-23	Jul-25	To be confirmed
16c	Number and age profile of the speakers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages	M1: NILS M2: ABS	SE16c.1–3	M1: NILS 3 M2: Census	M1: Periodic M2: 5 yearly	M1: 2018-19 M2: 2021	M1: 2018-19 M2: 2016, 2021	Jun-23	M1: 2019–21 M2: 2026
16d	Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who speak an Indigenous language	ABS	SE16d.1–3	M1: Census M2: NATSIHS	M1: 5 yearly M2: Periodic	M1: 2021 M2: 2022-23	M1: 2016, 2021 M2: 2018-19 to 2022-23	Jul-25	M1: 2026 M2: To be confirmed
16e	Accessing Commonwealth funded Indigenous language centres	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communicati	SE16e.1	SmartyGrants grants management system	Annual	M1: 2023-24 M2: 2024	M1: 2018-19 to 2023-24 M2: 2019 to 2024	Mar-25	M1: 2024-25 M2: 2025



Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
		ons and the Arts							
17a	Digital Inclusion	The ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S)	SE17a.1	Australian Digital Inclusion Index	Biannual	2023	2015 to 2023	Jul-24	2024
17e	Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using internet to access government services for private purposes	ABS	SE17e.1–2	NATSIHS	Periodic	2022-23	2022-23	July-25	To be confirmed
17f	Number of people employed in media	ABS	SE17f.1–3	Census	5 yearly	2021	2016, 2021	Jul-25	2026
17g	Number and location of community broadcast licenses	Australian Communications and Media	SE17g.1	Community Radio Broadcasting Licences	Periodic	2023	2015-23	Mar-24	2024



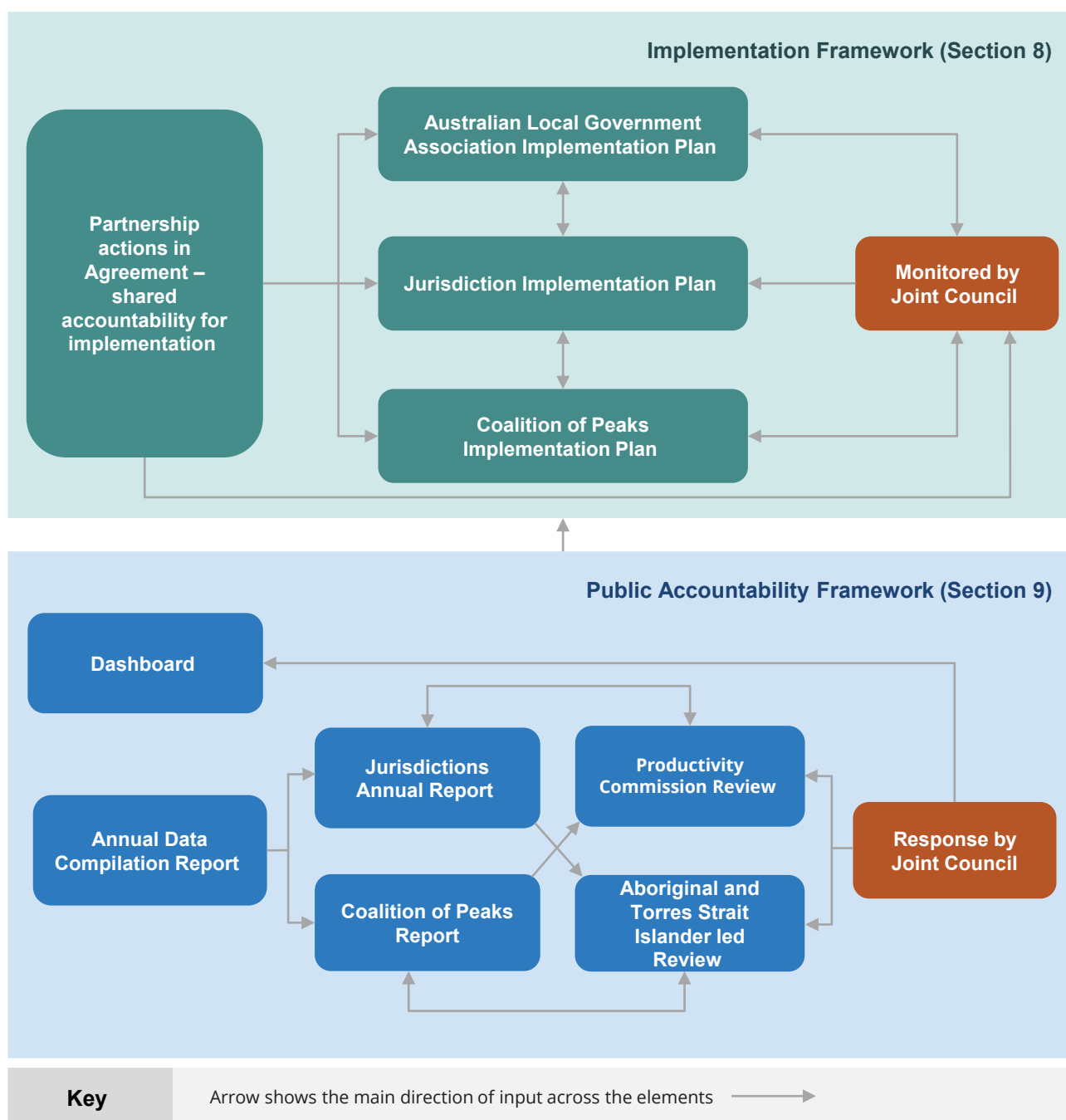
Indicator number	Indicator name	Data source	Table reference	Collection name	Data frequency	Latest data on dashboard	Years currently reported	Latest dashboard update	Reference year for next data
	with an Indigenous interest	Authority (ACMA)							

Note: # Revised population data included in this ADCR update

Attachment 3 – Closing the Gap governance frameworks

The public implementation and accountability frameworks under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap comprise a number of elements (figure A2). Together these elements commit the Parties – the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, the Australian Local Government Association and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations – to implement and be accountable for the agreed actions and progress under the Agreement.

Figure A2 – Public Implementation and Accountability Frameworks



Attachment 4 – State and territory assessment of progress

There are currently no agreed state and territory targets. The state and territory assessments in table A3 reflect progress from the baseline year (improving, worsening or no change). The assessments for Australia reflect progress from the baseline towards the national target.

Table A5 – Assessment of progress for states and territories across the national targets^a

Target	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
SEO 1 - males	→	..	→	→	→	•
SEO 1 - females	→	..	→	→	←	•
SEO 2	■	→	→	←	→	→	→	←	•
SEO 3	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	←	✓
SEO 4	←	→	→	←	■	←	←	←	←
SEO 5	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	•
SEO 6	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	•
SEO 7	→	→	→	→	←	→	→	←	•
SEO 8	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	←	✓
SEO 9A	→	→	→	→	→	←	←	→	•
SEO 9B
SEO 10	←	→	←	←	←	←	■	←	←
SEO 11	■	→	←	→	→	■	←	←	■
SEO 12	→	←	←	■	←	←	→	→	←
SEO 13
SEO 14	←
SEO 15A	→	→	→	→	→	■	■	→	✓
SEO 15B ^a	■	→	→	→	→	■	..	→	✓
SEO 16
SEO 17

a. The Australian Government also contributes to meeting Target 15B and have shown improvement since the baseline.

Legend	✓	•	→	■	←	..
	Good improvement and on track (Aust only)	Improvement but not on track (Aust only)	Improvement	No change	Worsening	No assessment



Attachment 5 – Local council partnership with an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation to work on Closing the Gap

For the first time in Australia, a local council and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations have signed a formal agreement to work together.

On Friday 9 May 2025, representatives from Tamworth Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (TACCO) and Tamworth Regional Council (2025) came together for a ceremony celebrating the Mara Ngali Partnership Agreement.

The new agreement follows the formal establishment of TACCO in July 2024, a coalition formed to provide a strong, united voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Tamworth LGA.

The partnership will be an opportunity to take the 17 national Closing the Gap Strategy targets and build them into a local reality for Tamworth's Aboriginal community.

Mara Ngali will be the first time in Australian history that a local council has signed a formal partnership with an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation to work together on Closing the Gap. It commits both parties to work together to deliver Closing the Gap initiatives on a local level.

Source: Tamworth Regional Council (2025).



Attachment 6 – Current progress of the development of measurement for the Priority Reform targets

The Priority Reforms are the foundation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, however, there is not yet a framework in place or agreement on the data to be collected that could inform an assessment of progress towards them. Since the 2023 ADCR, work on developing these measures has commenced. However, they remain under development. Figure A3 provides an overview of progress towards developing measurements for each of the priority reforms.

Figure A3 – Current progress of the development of measurement of the Priority Reforms

	Priority Reform 1	Priority Reform 2	Priority Reform 3	Priority Reform 4
Phases for developing measurement	Partnership arrangements in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments enshrining joint decision-making	Increase the amount of government funding going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations	Decrease the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who experience racism	Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions
Phase One: Develop and agree on an approach for developing measurement	✓ Complete	✓ Complete	✓ Complete	✓ Complete
Phase Two: Develop and agree on the measurement concepts and computation	... In progress	... In progress	... In progress	... In progress
Phase Three: Develop data for reporting on the measures	✗ Not started	✗ Not started	✗ Not started	✗ Not started
Phase Four: Collect the data for reporting	✗ Not started	✗ Not started	✗ Not started	✗ Not started
Phase Five: Report data and build the time series	✗ Not started	✗ Not started	✗ Not started	✗ Not started



Glossary

Age-standardised rate

Age-standardised rates are used when populations have different age structures (for example, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a younger age structure than the non-Indigenous population) and the topic of the data varies with age (for example, older people are more likely to access chronic disease care). Age differences are adjusted across populations using the Australian Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2001, in accordance with the agreed principles for direct age-standardisation.⁵⁶

Confidence interval

Confidence intervals (CIs) are the range where the 'true' result – the result we would get if the data included the whole population, not just a sample – is likely to be found with a given level of probability. Confidence intervals in this report use a 95% level of probability. This means we are 95% confident that the range specified by the confidence intervals contains the 'true' result. A larger range is indicative of a larger sampling error (see: **sampling error**).

Gender/Sex

A person's sex is based upon their sex characteristics, typically based upon the sex characteristics observed at birth or infancy. Gender may be informed by an individual's identity, self-expression, or experience and does not always align with sex characteristics recorded at birth (ABS 2021).

Currently, most data sources used to inform the Closing the Gap dashboard collect and report on data by sex. However, Australian statistical agencies are starting to introduce methods to collect a person's gender. Information on how sex and/or gender is collected and reported for each target/indicator is provided within the target/indicator data specifications on the PC CtG dashboard (where sex/gender is reported).

The terms "male" and "female" are used throughout the body of the report to reflect the available data, which is primarily based on sex assigned at birth. Where the data is collected by gender, the terms "men" and "women" are used instead.

Indicator

Indicators are the concepts, experiences, or activities measured for each of the targets. There are two types of indicators covered in this report.

⁵⁶ For more information on the principles used for the age standardisation in this report, refer to AIHW (2011b).



- *Contextual information indicator*: provides insight into the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under each socio-economic outcome.
- *Driver indicator*: measures the factors that significantly impact the progress made against a socio-economic target.

Linear regression estimate

Linear regression is a technique used to estimate the relationship between variables by fitting a linear equation to a dataset. In this report it is used to compare the baseline year of data to the current year and assess if there is a change in the data. If there is an improvement, the technique is used to project a value for the target year, which is measured against the value of the target to assess if a target is on track to be met.

Measure

For each **indicator**, there may be one or more measures. Measures allow us to create or locate the right datasets and are a more detailed and concrete understanding of what each indicator means.

Percentage points

Percentage points are used to refer to changes and differences between one percentage and another. For example, an increase from 11% to 14% constitutes an increase of 3 percentage points, calculated from the baseline value.

Relative standard error

The relative standard error (RSE) measures the sampling error and is expressed as a percentage of the estimate. Estimates with a low RSE have a low sampling error. Estimates with larger RSEs (between 25% and 50%) should be used with caution. Estimates with RSEs of 50% or more are considered unreliable for most purposes.

Sampling error

The variation that is expected when data is collected from a subset of a population – the results will not be perfectly identical to the results obtained from collecting data from an entire group. Larger sampling errors are associated with higher relative standard errors (see: **relative standard error**) and/or wider confidence intervals (see: **confidence intervals**).

Socio-economic quintiles

In this report, socio-economic status is usually classified according to the ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA): Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD), which classifies geographic areas into five 'quintiles' - most disadvantaged, second most disadvantaged, middle 20%,



second least disadvantaged and least disadvantaged - each representing approximately 20% of geographic areas across Australia.⁵⁷

Target

Targets are specific and measurable goals for each of the outcome areas. Targets focus on an 'end point' and are a way to determine if a desired outcome has been achieved.

Trajectory

Trajectories show the direction and speed of change needed from today to meet the target in the future.

Variability bands

Rates derived from administrative data are not subject to sampling error, but might still be subject to natural random variation, especially for small counts. Variability bands account for this variation and are similar to confidence intervals (see: **confidence interval**) in that they provide a specified range for an estimate which is very likely (95 times out of 100) to contain the 'true' value.

⁵⁷ For more information on socioeconomic quintiles, refer to ABS (2023b).



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